

IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS FOR LARGE CARNIVORE CONSERVATION: A TRANSFER OF BEST PRACTICES

INCEPTION REPORT





LIFE Project Number
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Inception Report
Covering the project activities from 01/01/2009 to 31/08/2009

Reporting Date
30/09/2009

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
Improving the conditions of large carnivore conservation: a transfer of best practices
EX-TRA

Data Project

Project location	Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece
Project start date:	01/01/2012
Project end date:	31/03/2013
Total budget	€ 2.580.802
EC contribution:	€ 1.767.850
(%) of eligible costs	68,5%

Data Beneficiary

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1. List of abbreviations

AGVPS – National Association of Hunters and Fishermen, Romania
ALPARC – Alpine Network of Protected Areas
BET – Bear Emergency Team
CNPA – Carpathian Network of Protected Areas
CSC – Centre for Studies and Research, Romania
ELGA – National Organisation for Farmers Compensation, Greece
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency, Romania
GIS – Geographic information system
GPS – Global positioning system
HD – Human Dimensions
LGD – Livestock guarding dog
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
NGO – Non governmental organisation
ROMSILVA – State Forest Administration, Romania
VAT – Value Added Tax

2. Executive summary

2.1 General progress

The LIFE EX-TRA project has started on 01.01.2009 and the first three months have seen mainly the development of administrative procedures such as hiring necessary staff, partnership agreements, purchase procedures, subcontracting consultants etc. The general coordinator of the project has started working on the project on 1st February and is since then fully active for guaranteeing the positive development of the project.

Some technical activities have already started in the first three months of the project, such as the monitoring of the damage caused by carnivores on livestock, and the technical planning of the actions for monitoring predator and prey distributions.

The earthquake in Abruzzo Region has then caused a severe problem for the project, mainly for the work in the territory of PNGSL. The other partners have carried out their activities as far as possible, although also they have suffered some problems indirectly due to the fact that PNGSL coordinates many of the common actions.

Nevertheless, in April and May most of the field activities have started in all the project areas, and much of the planning of future actions has progressed. Also the set of actions for the involvement of stakeholders in planning processes has been commonly planned and coordinated.

The first international steering group meeting, which was initially planned to take place in late April, finally was held in late June, and has allowed the in-depth planning of all the actions throughout the first project year, as well as the clarification of many administrative issues.

The first best practice and experience exchange trips have already taken place, thus allowing a constant flow of information and expertise among the project participants from the very beginning of the project.

A financial manager has been contracted, in collaboration of whom administrative guidance and management tools have been developed. The first two financial reports have been made, and many initial uncertainties have been clarified – the associated beneficiaries now know the basic administrative procedures and also know whom they can address to in cases of need.

A first review of the project and its budget have been made, and it appears clear that no major changes are necessary and the project is fully feasible as planned with only minor budget adaptations.

2.2 Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable.

The project objectives and the work plan are still viable as foreseen. There have been some delays in some actions (please refer to par. 2.3 and to project descriptions sections “problems and delays”), but none of these are significant and none of these are likely to modify the achievement of the project objectives or the success of the single actions.

2.3 Problems encountered.

The first and most severe problem appeared when there was the earthquake in Abruzzo Region on 6 April 2009. The headquarters of PNGSL are located in a village in the nearby of the city of L’Aquila, and the office of the staff involved in the EX-TRA project has been strongly damaged and is not accessible anymore. Moreover, several staff members have lost their houses and many people have gone through very difficult personal situations. Both in the technical team and the administrative section many persons have not been in the office for several weeks and have had strong practical and emotional problems when they have started work again. This problem has caused the delay of some actions in the territory of PNGS but also of some actions at international level that are coordinated by PNGSL.

However, the staff is strongly working towards meeting the project schedule and it is likely that the timing of most of the actions will be recovered during the project phase. Also, none

of the delays are so strong to jeopardize the success of the actions or the achievement of the project objectives.

The signature of the partnership contract with the Bulgarian Ministry of the Environment (MOEW) was slightly delayed and signed in September. This was due to the political situation in Bulgaria: the beginning of 2009 was time for preparing the elections and the Ministry of Environment and Water (as the other ministries) was expecting changes in the ruling party, respectively changing the managing staff of the ministry. After the new Minister was appointed by the newly elected parliament the contract was signed and the staff started to proceed with the development of the activities.

Due to the recent world economic recession, potential sponsors of the beneficiary CALLISTO (Greece) changed their initial promising position and adopted a non-committal attitude. The World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA - see <http://www.wspa.org.uk/>) decided to offer a 4.400 euros financial support to the project activities in Greece for 2009. For the rest of CALLISTO's commitment, the Greek Ministry for Environment, Land Planning and Public Works has already agreed for contributing financially to the project. Unfortunately, the announcement of early National Elections for next October (4/10/09) has delayed the official Ministerial Decision.

To overcome this problem, CALLISTO continues its efforts on fund-raising, for covering its own financial contribution commitment to the project as well as for securing additional funds that will allow operation of the Bear Emergency Teams for at least two more years.

2.4 Foreseen changes

As mentioned before no major or substantial changes are foreseen in the project. Only some minor technical adaptations are foreseen to make the project work more efficiently according to the needs. For more details please refer to the respective action descriptions

Actions A5, A6, C2, E3 – Stakeholder research and involvement

For the development of these actions the University of L'Aquila has been contracted, which has outstanding expertise in public involvement activities.

Among the three Italian beneficiaries (PNGSL, PNMS, PNATE) it was decided to create a common fund, in which the beneficiaries unite their budgets for the up mentioned actions, and which will be used to pay the work of the University of L'Aquila in all three Parks. Moreover, the University of L'Aquila has developed guidelines for the development of these actions also in the other countries. This will help to have a common research and management approach, which also make it possible to come up with comparable information in the four countries.

Also, in PNMS it was decided that the budget for Action A6 will be united with the budget for Action A5 and common, but more in-depth analysis will be made than initially planned.

Action A7 – Damage assessment.

According to the project PNGSL was not planning to perform this action. However, since damage assessment is done in any case in this action, the damage assessment activities in this region will become an integral part of the project.

Subcontracting Actions A8, A9, C3, C4, C6, C7, E4 and E5.

The beneficiary PNMS has decided to subcontract the technical development of all the up mentioned actions to a technical association of professionals, "Studio Faunistico CHIROS".

Action C6 – Bear Emergency Teams

Although it was initially planned that the staff involved in the BETs will travel to areas where such teams are already active, it results now for some areas to be more reasonable to have a specialist visit the project sites and provide more specific consultancy adapted to the local needs.

In Italy it had initially been planned that a common BET would be set up by PNGSL and PNMS. Due to reasons of technical and geographic suitability this was now changed: a common protocol and coordination group will be set up, but two separate intervention groups and sets of equipment will be needed to respond better to local needs.

Action D4 – Info panels

It was decided to produce the information panels in cardboard or similar materials, but in higher numbers than initially planned. This will help to be more flexible in installing the panels in different places according to the needs.

3. Administrative part

3.1 Description of project management

The project is performed by the following 7 beneficiaries:

Coordinating beneficiary: PNGSL – Parco Nazionale Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga, Italy
Associated beneficiaries: Parco Nazionale Monti Sibillini, Italy (PNMS), Parco Nazionale Appennino tosco-emiliano, Italy (PNATE), Transilvania University of Brasov, Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering, Romania (TUB – FSFE), Balkani Wildlife Society, Bulgaria (BWS), Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria (MOEW), CALLISTO NGO, Greece

The general project coordination is done by an international project manager (Annette Mertens), who is temporarily (for 4 years) hired by the beneficiary on the basis of a project contract. The coordinator carries out the following duties:

- Technical and financial supervision of actions carried out by the beneficiary and the project partners
- Supervision of the work done by the financial manager
- Determination and control of internal administrative rules
- Control of the technical performance of the project actions (timing, deliverables etc.)
- Organization and coordination of steering group meetings, reports
- Coordination of actions that are carried out on a multi-partner basis
- Communication with the EC and the external monitoring team
- Support of communication between partners
- Support to project participants about technical and administrative issues

The general project manager is directly supported by a financial manager (Luca Santarossa - also hired by the beneficiary with a project contract), who has the following duties:

- Supervision of all administrative procedures carried out by the project partners (e.g. contracts with staff, purchasing procedures, requests of documentation etc.)
- Support to project partners about financial rules of the EC and eligibility of costs
- Support to project partners for financial statements
- Coordination of production of financial statements
- Control of financial statements delivered by project partners
- Control of project budget and potential changes

The general manager and the financial manager also work in close contact with the project coordinator for the beneficiary (Pina Leone), who is also responsible for the coordination of the technical and administrative details between the three Italian project partners.

Each partner has delegated a person responsible for the coordination of the project, which together with the project manager and the financial manager form the steering group. The first international steering group meeting has been held in June 2009, and representatives of all countries were present. At the steering group the details of all project actions were discussed, time plans were made, common methods were established, potential problems were discussed, and administrative issues were risen and solved. The second international steering group meeting will be held in February 2010.

In addition, national meetings are held (especially in Italy where the project is carried out by three partners) (Actions A2 and E1), at which the steering group members of the respective partners are present. In general, technical meetings have been carried out by all project partners, both with other project partners (Italy and Bulgaria) and with local involved bodies such as authorities, stakeholders etc. (all countries). These meetings have served to present

the project at local/national level and to gain the support and cooperation of the involved interest groups.

The project website (www.lifextra.it) will include an internal platform for the management and exchange of project documents and materials necessary for the general project development.

3.2 Organigramme of the project team and the project management structure

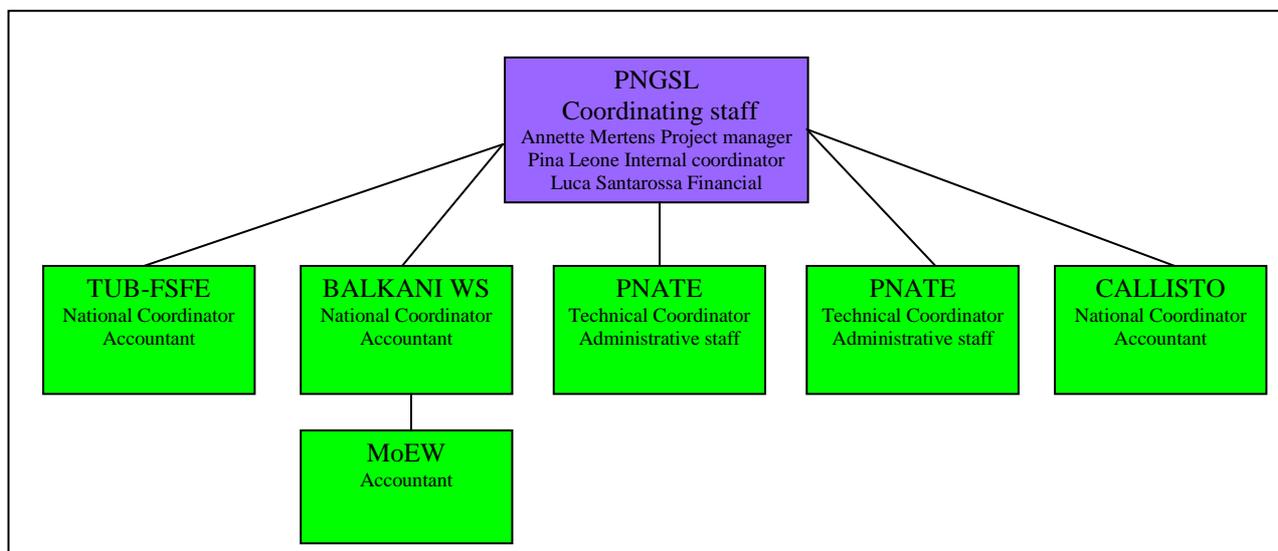


Figure 1. Organigramme of the LIFE EX-TRA management structure

3.3 Partnership agreements status (incl. date of signature) and key content

Partnership agreements have been signed between the coordinating beneficiary and each of the associated beneficiaries (Annex I). Therefore, 6 agreements have been signed. The form proposed by the EC has been used and only very slightly modified to add additional details that seemed to be important. All the agreements have been signed in March, except for the one with MOEW, which has been signed on 20.09.2009

The agreements were signed on the following days:

The main articles included in the agreements were the following:

- Subject (Including name of project)
- Duration
- Obligations of the beneficiary (including cofunding and communication with the EC)
- Obligations of the associated beneficiary: actions the beneficiary is responsible for, deliverables and timing, relations between the associated beneficiary and other associated beneficiaries
- Common obligations
- Subcontractors
- Civil liability
- Conflicts of interest
- Technical activity reports: specifying the contents and deadlines of different types of inputs provided by the associated beneficiary
- Communication actions, publicity for Community support and audio-visual products
- Confidentiality
- Financial reporting: includes details about timing and procedures of financial reporting activities
- Estimated eligible costs and associated beneficiary's contribution to the project

- Payment terms: includes bank details and exact timing and procedures with which the payments are made to the associated beneficiaries, also in relation to the timing of the financial reports
- Ownership and exploitation of results
- Commission financial audit
- Checks and inspections
- Termination of partnership agreement
- Jurisdiction clause

The contracts with the different associated beneficiaries were almost identical, differing only for the procedure of distribution of the EC contribution to public bodies or to NGOs.

The public bodies will receive the EC contribution as follows:

- 40% of the maximum EC contribution to the budget of the associated beneficiary, upon signature of the partnership agreement and of presentation of an adequate request of payment, on condition that PNGSL will have received the first payment by the EC.
- 30% of the maximum EC contribution to the budget of the associated beneficiary, on condition at least 150% of the first pre-financing payment has been consumed (as a percentage of costs incurred) and that the payment has been requested at least nine months before the project's end date. The payment shall be made after the approval, by the Commission, of the inception report, the mid-term technical report and the statement of expenditure and income provided for in Article 12 of the Common Provisions.
- The balance payment (of up to maximum 30% of the EC contribution to the budget of the associated beneficiary) after the approval, by the Commission, of both the final technical report and the statement of expenditure and income provided for in Article 12 of the Common Provisions. The payment will be made on condition that PNGSL will have received the balance payment by the EC.

The NGOs will receive the EC contribution as follows:

For every sum of at least 10.000 EUR that were spent the associated beneficiary can submit a complete financial statement to PNGSL, which will then reimburse 68,5% (the proportion of cofunding by the EC) of the value within 30 days from the date of signature of a request of payment.

In addition to the above mentioned regulation, financial statements shall be delivered at least three every four months. These are in any case subject to the achievement of the conditions and limits foreseen in Article 28 of the Common Provisions, as well as to the achievement of the project objectives foreseen in the project action descriptions and by the timing of the project.

4. Technical part

In this context the aim of the LIFE EX-TRA project is to improve the know-how of conservation actors in what concerns activities for the conservation of wolves and bears. It foresees to raise the capacities of all participants about essential aspects of carnivore conservation: biological aspects, interactions with other species, conflict management and stakeholder involvement.

This project will be a tool to disseminate the expertise and good practice gained in the previously developed LIFE COEX Project (www.life-coex.net), which has taken place from 2004 to 2008. This initiative has made big efforts and gained consistent experience in the prevention of damage caused on livestock by trying to understand the needs of local farmers and by disseminating the use of fencing systems and of livestock guarding dogs.

4.1 Actions

Action A1. Preparation of administrative and legal background

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31. 12.2009

Progress

Italy: The necessary administrative documentation for the beginning of the project has been prepared:

- The administrative procedures of the public bodies have been carried out
- The project manager and the financial manager have been contracted after selection through a public tender.
- The project staff has been chosen and officially seconded to the project
- Public procedures have been made to hire/contract several technical figures (e.g. veterinaries, technicians for field work, Human Dimensions specialists, webmaster etc.)
- Partnership agreements have been produced and signed
- First payments of the EC contribution were made to the associated beneficiaries
- The necessary public tenders were made for the purchase of technical equipment, such as telescopes, binoculars, GPS, electric fences etc.
- An agreement for the purchase of Red deer from Parco Nazionale Foreste Casentinesi has been made

The staff/consultants were chosen according to the following criteria:

Italy: For technicians, vets, project managers – public tenders

For services below 12.000 EUR – direct selection

TUB: Coordinator – public tender

Services below 15.000 EUR – direct selection

BWS and CALLISTO: Direct selection because they are NGOs and don't have to make public tenders

Problems and delays

The signature of the partnership contract with the Bulgarian Ministry of the Environment (MOEW) was slightly delayed and signed in September. This was due to the political elections in the country, which have slowed down bureaucratic procedures in all public management bodies. However this delay did not affect the timeliness of the development of the project actions.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

All the foreseen procedures have been carried out and all the necessary administrative documentation is ready.

Action A2. Kick-off steering group meetings

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.03.2009

Progress:

A kick-off steering group meeting was held from 23 to 25 June at Rocca Calascio, in the territory of PNGSL. Actions were discussed in detail, a time plan and an action plan for the future actions were established, and methodologies for Actions A and the management actions were agreed upon. Also, the rules of the different project participants were established, responsibilities were assigned and the management structure of the project was clearly defined. Delegates from all project countries participated, summing up to a total of 15 participants.

Problems and delays

As stated in the letter to the EC of 22 April 2009 (Prot. Nr. 3607/2009) the delay of this meeting (initially planned to take place in the first months of the project) was due to the earthquake in Abruzzo Region in Italy, where the meeting was initially planned to take place. This delay did not affect the project. During the first months the details of the actions were discussed through email, skype and telephone, and the meeting was then developed in July, still offering the possibility to do adequate planning for the upcoming period.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

An international action plan and the minutes of the kick-off meeting were produced.

Deliverables

Annex II.1: Minutes of the kick-off meeting

Annex II.2: International action plan

Action A3. Initial technical national meetings

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.06.2009

Progress

Italy: On 10/02/2009 at the headquarters of PNGSL in Camarda the first national technical coordination meeting took place at which representatives all three Italian project participants were present. The following issues were discussed: partnership agreements, explanation of first administrative and financial rules, coordination of common actions.

On 12/05/2009 a technical meeting was held in the headquarters of PNMS at Visso. The meeting was attended by the park staff, the project manager, representatives of “Studio Faunistico Chiros” (which is subcontracted for the development of some project actions (please refer to Action A9)) and an free-lance veterinary, Dr. Francesca Di Bartolomeo (Action A7). The scope was a more in-depth revision of the administrative rules and the discussion of some technical details.

On 07/05/2009 a technical meeting was held in the headquarters of PNATE at Cervarezza Terme. The park staff and the project manager were present. The details of administrative and financial rules were discussed and technical details of the project actions were reviewed.

Romania: The first Technical National Meeting for Romania was held in 12th of January 2009, at the project office in Brasov (UTFF building). The participants discussed the project activities and implementation issues.

On a monthly basis, the project team had regular meetings at the project office and detailed time planning were revised and discussed. The project staff also had several meetings with representatives of Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and local environmental protection agencies.

Bulgaria: In Bulgaria a first national kick off meeting took place in the headquarters of MOEW in Sofia on 4th February 2009. Participants from the three National parks and the Regional Environmental Inspectorate of Smolyan Region as well as the team from BWS were present. The national coordinator Aleksandar Dutsov presented the project that has

been finally approved, gave clear instructions about administrative, financial and other specific legally requirements for LIFE+ projects. The most urgent activities such as emergency groups, damage monitoring, monitoring of brown bear, purchasing of equipment, cooperation between BWS and the structures of MOEW, questionnaires, ect. have been planned, deadlines were agree and responsibilities were agreed.

Greece: The first national technical meeting was held in Hotel Adrachti, Kastraki Kalambakas, Trikala Prefecture, on 23 April 2009. All members of CALLISTO were invited to participate in the meeting, in order to get informed about the project in general, and to discuss details on implementation of the project activities in Greece.

The project objectives and expected results were presented and the participants discussed the strategies CALLISTO should adopt in order to achieve the project goals. Details for the internal coordination of the project activities to be implemented in Greece were discussed.

Specific actions in the framework of the project were later reviewed in detail in relation to the Time Plan of the project. Opinions on the working plan for implementation of each Action, and the experts that could staff the project team were exchanged.

Finally, the project team was formed, and financial details (personnel fees, travel expenses, purchases of equipment and consumables, etc.) were agreed.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The methodological details of the project actions are now settled, administrative rules are set. A working plan has been developed in each country.

Deliverables

Annex II.3: Minutes of the first national technical meetings

Action A4. Initial training sessions for transfer of expertise

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 30.06.2009

Progress

A best practice manual is being produced and will be ready at the end of October 2009. It consists in a large Power Point presentation that provides technical details and information about different aspects of best practice in management, as learned during the development of the LIFE COEX Project. The best practice manual will be made available to all the project partners and will be put onto the downloads page of the project website.

A trip was made to Romania in the second week of July to disseminate best practice from the LIFE COEX Project onto the new project areas. Meetings were held with representatives of the Romanian project partner, and of the bodies cooperating with this partner (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency). Also, on 10 July, a one-day workshop for transfer of expertise within Romanian institutions dealing with wildlife management was held in Brasov (Annex II.4). During this workshop the activities of the LIFE EX-TRA Project were presented, as well as best practices developed in the LIFE COEX and other large carnivore conservation issues in Romania and Europe. The unclear conservation status of large carnivores and need for institutional collaboration were the main problems discussed during the meeting.

A second trip was made to Bulgaria from 16 to 19 September 2009 (Annex II.4). Two presentations about best practices developed in the frame of the LIFE COEX project were made: on 17th September at the MOEW, and on the 18th at one of the headquarters of Central Balkans National Park. The presentations were followed by technical discussions about the presented techniques and how they can be adapted to local needs.

In the frame of the second part of the action (Task A.4.2) a trip is being organised for representatives of Romania, Bulgaria and Greece to travel to PNGSL in the third week of October. Here they will participate at a first course for the training about damage assessment and prevention techniques (for description please refer to Action C1). Also, they will make a 1-day field trip where they will be informed about the actions performed in the frame of the LIFE COEX Project and the experiences gained.

Problems and delays

Due to the postponement of some activities, including the delayed steering group meeting (Action A2) the trip to Bulgaria was delayed from June to September, in order to best fit with the timing of the involved staff. This will not affect the development of the project.

Changes

The trip to Greece for the dissemination of best practice from the LIFE COEX Project has not been made due to the following reason: the Greek beneficiary CALLISTO has been closely involved with the development of the LIFE COEX Project from its very beginning and has been subcontracted for the development of public awareness actions. Like this the staff of CALLISTO has become well aware of the activities of the up mentioned project and the lessons learned from it, and has thus been able to function as a vector of expertise on the National level. It was therefore considered that making a trip to Greece to inform the staff of CALLISTO about best practices would not have an outstanding added value. Rather, the money of this trip will be spared to allow an additional trip in 2010 or 2011 for experience exchange or for the dissemination of best practices matured in these years. This change will help use the budget in way to provide the best value for money.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The minutes of the training sessions in Romania and Bulgaria are available.

The minutes of the training in PNGSL will be available by the end of the year.

The best practice manual will be available by end of October.

Deliverables

Annex II.4: Minutes of the training workshops in Romania and Bulgaria

Action A5. Stakeholder analysis

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2009

Progress

A consortium of Human Dimension (HD) Experts was agreed by the representatives of the four project countries, for the coordination of the common development of the stakeholder research and involvement activities.

PNGSL has subcontracted the technical planning and implementation of this work (Actions A5, A6, C2 and E3) to the Department of Compared Cultures of the University of L'Aquila, represented by Prof. Angelo Turco. For making the contract a public tender was not needed according to the Italian law since it is a service provided from one public body to another.

During the "Kick-off steering group meeting" in Rocca Calascio, Italy, 23-25 June 2009, the framework concerning stakeholder analysis proposed by Prof. Turco has been accepted by the Consortium.

The University of L'Aquila has suffered severe damage during the earthquake in Abruzzo Region of 6 April 2009. Nevertheless, the team has developed the methodological guidelines that will be followed in all the phases of the HD work. In order to be able to standardize the procedures across the four project countries these guidelines were also proposed to the international project partners (during the Steering Group meeting in Rocca Calascio) and the partners have committed to use these methodologies after having adapted them to the specific territorial and socio-economic conditions.

Also some of the international project partners had initially come up with some methodological approaches, which seemed not to be in line with the approach suggested by the University of L'Aquila. But these divergences were solved during an in-depth discussion at which each exposed the socio-economic and naturalistic background in their countries and the possibility for a common approach was discussed.

Italy: An agreement was reached between the Italian project partners (PNGSL, PNMS and PNATE) according to which the present actions (as well as actions C2 and E3) will be coordinated by PNGSL in all three national parks. The work has successfully started and the technical planning phase is completed. The field work will be developed in the next months.

Romania: A database with stakeholders (27 institutions) from each Romanian project area was produced in April 2009. Based on this database and on the 'actor's dynamics' approach, a methodology for stakeholder analysis was developed together with the contracted company (CSC – Centre for Studies and Researches). The methodology is based on direct interviews with representatives of each stakeholder institution. The interviews are focused on roles and responsibilities of each institution, legal framework, needs and expectations, institutional framework related to large carnivore conservation. Such interviews started in June 2009 and the results will be available in November 2009.

Bulgaria: In Bulgaria a HD specialist was contracted (Ivayla Tasseva) and few meetings were held between the project staff and the consultant in order to discuss information needed and envisaged methods. After consultation with the methodology developed by the University of L'Aquila similar adapted methods were chosen. The first step was to set up a list of all possible stakeholders in the project area (which will probably point other interested parties). The second step will be consultation with all possible stakeholders through group meeting and non parametric questionnaires.

Greece: The Greek version of templates to be used in this stage has already been prepared by Dr. Tasos Hovardas, the HD expert of CALLISTO. The Greek version builds on the accepted approach and specifies certain areas of special interest for Greek protected areas, namely, the need for undertaking intra- and inter- stakeholder round-table discussions to reach consensus on the issue of large carnivore conservation.

As outlined in the working paper of Prof. Angelo Turco, the overall approach CALLISTO will adopt in the frame of stakeholder analysis builds on actor dynamics and social network analysis as well as the tool of alternative dispute resolution.

Problems and delays

As mentioned in the letter of 22 April 2009 to the EC the present action suffered a delay of some months due to the earthquake in Abruzzo Region. The methodological framework has already been settled but in some areas the field work will start with some months later than initially planned (Italy: autumn, Romania: already started in July, Bulgaria: already started in August, Greece: October). The delay has affected also the development of the action in the other project countries since these were waiting for the methodological guidelines to be developed by the University of L'Aquila. This delay will not affect the outcome of the project and it is likely that it will be recovered and will not affect the timely start of Action C2.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is in still in an initial phases and the outputs will be recognizable in some months time.

Action A6. Analysis of attitudes about coexistence with large carnivores

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 30.09.2009

Progress

Romania: A structure of the opinion poll questionnaire was agreed between project team and the experts from CSC. The opinion poll campaign that will be carried out in all three project areas (Sacele, Dalnic and Herculian) will start in September 2009 and the results of this analysis are foreseen to be available in December 2009.

II Bulgaria this action will not be carried out because similar actions have already been performed in the past years.

Greece: Dr. Tasos Hovardas, the HD expert of CALLISTO, has already prepared a questionnaire addressing the questions under consideration.

The questionnaire comprises several parts, namely: a word association task on targeted species (1), respondents' knowledge and beliefs on targeted species (2), respondents' knowledge and beliefs on damage caused by targeted species (3) as well as damage prevention measures (4), investigation of encounters with targeted species (5), social networks dealing with targeted species (6), consensus estimates on participation in

conservation of targeted species (7) as well as financial support of compensation programs concerning targeted species (8), the socio-demographic profile of the sample (9).

This questionnaire was sent to other partners and HD experts in the framework of the project, in order to initiate a relevant discussion and to select any possible comment. Following the relevant discussion made between the project beneficiaries during the “Kick-off steering group meeting” in Rocca Calascio, the Greek version of the questionnaire was adapted to the needs of the Greek project area and is now available for dissemination/interviews in the project area (opinion polls).

Changes

Italy: In Italy this action was planned to be carried out only in PNMS and in PNATE because in PNGSL a similar action has already been carried out in the frame of the LIFE COEX Project. In PNMS and PNATE it was decided that this action will be combined with Action A5 in the same areas. Action A6 foresees a quantitative assessment of the opinions of the general public about large carnivore conservation issues, whereas similar assessments, but with a qualitative approach, will be done in the frame of Action A5. After discussions with the experts from the University of L'Aquila it appeared evident that coupling the two Actions in one effort (with a common budget) will make more sense than keeping the actions separate. Therefore the budget for this action in Italy (7.500 EUR) was added to the budget for Action A5, which will also include an assessment that will provide information about the attitudes of the locals about coexistence with large carnivores.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is in still in an initial phase and the outputs will be recognizable in some months time.

Action A7. Preliminary damage assessment

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2009

Progress

Italy: Veterinaries were contracted (3 in PNGSL and 1 in PNMS) in order to do the assessment of the cases of damage caused by carnivores on livestock. In PNGSL a public tender was made whereas in PNMS the veterinary was selected from a list of specialists available to the Park from a previous national procedure.

The damage assessment has started in spring- summer (PNGSL: January, PNMS: July, PNATE: July) and is performed with questionnaires that were adapted from the ones previously used in the frame of the LIFE COEX Project, to collect information about the following:

- general information about the livestock holding
- used damage prevention techniques
- description of the damage

The following assessments have been done until now:

PNMS: 7

PNGSL: 132 + census of 76 livestock holdings

PNATE: 4

Moreover, the census of livestock guarding dogs in the holdings has started in these Parks. For this each holding is visited and the numbers, breeds and the code of the microchip (if they have it) are registered.

Romania: Since the beginning of the grazing season (May 2009) 47 shepherd camps from all three Romanian project areas were included in the damage assessment inventory. The activity is done by project team members (George Predoiu, Daniel Iordache, Bogdan Florescu, Vladimir Popescu) and volunteers (Laszlo Szekely, Ioan Jantea and Tiberiu Serban), who regularly visit the shepherd camps and collect data with the help of questionnaires that were developed in the frame of the LIFE COEX project and adapted to the local needs: GPS coordinates of each location, description of shepherd camp (owner,

land status, vegetation, type of protection, distance to forest, livestock, guarding dogs, problems encountered), description of protection methods used (type of fences, protection by day and by night, livestock guarding dogs used, problems encountered), description of damages and attacks on livestock (typology of attacks, conditions during attacks, description of damages and injuries caused to livestock). This information is linked to the GIS maps for all project areas. The activity will continue until the end of grazing season (September – October 2009) and all the information will be included in the action report.

Bulgaria: For the assessment of the damages a unified questionnaire was prepared to be used for interviewing purposes in the project area. Meanwhile, the Regional Environmental Inspectorate (REI) of Smolian region provided data for bear damages for the years from 2004 to 2008, registered in official protocols. Preliminary analysis of all this data (totally 201 for the period) was conducted to appoint the areas with most frequent attacks. The surveys have begun and 45 assessments have been done up to now.

Greece: Questionnaire survey: The development of the standardized semi-structured type questionnaires has initially been based on the questionnaires used in the frame of the previously developed LIFE COEX project. The questionnaires are under final translation process and final adaptation to the specific action, to the Greek context and especially to the context of the area targeted by the project. Also selection of the sample of the farms to be surveyed is under completion. The preliminary damage assessment procedure consists of two complementary parts: the first part that deals mainly with the field survey part: dissemination of the questionnaire through interviews and visits to farmers is assured by the local assistant of the project permanently based in the area targeted by the project and native of the area. This fact is expected to optimize the quantity and quality of information that is going to be collected. In parallel, the projects local assistant, who has good relations with many farmers in the project area, is collecting all ad-hoc first hand available information in bear damage cases.

Data collection from responsible organizations: the appointed project personnel has already made the necessary contacts with the central headquarters of the National Organization for Farmers' Compensation (ELGA) in order to obtain the digital data base on the yearly bear damage declared and compensated. ELGA keeps systematic records on all declared and compensated cases of bear damage at country scale. In response ELGA has sent a complete digital data base (.xls files) on registered bear damage for the period 1999-2008. These data are now being processed by the personnel appointed by the project in order to focus on the area targeted by the project. They also proceed to a first mapping, visualisation and quantification of the problem in order to better orientate the field survey but also to crosscheck the geographical intensity of the problem between official data and data obtained through the questionnaire survey.

Problems and delays

Italy - PNMS: The territory of PNMS extends over two administrative Regions (Umbria and Marche). In this Park the damage caused by predators on livestock is compensated following two different procedures: only the damage that occurs in the territory of Umbria, about one third of the total, is compensated by the Park Administration, whereas in the rest of the area the Regional Administration of Marche is responsible for the damage assessment and the compensation payments. This means that the Park administration has access to the information on only about one third of the damage that occurs in its territory.

In order to overcome this problem a meeting was organized (in the frame of Action C5) on 16/06/2009 with the competent bodies (Regional governments, State Veterinary Service and Forest Administration) in order to find a way for the Park staff to be involved also in the collection of data about the damage in the whole Park range. Following this meeting, the Park has already obtained access to the data about the damage occurred in the territory of Marche region in 2009. The work with the local administrations has to continue in order to give the park veterinary the possibility to be present during the analysis of all the damage cases. This problem is very unlikely to affect the positive outcome of the project because

information about the damage on the whole territory is anyhow available and the relation with the local responsible bodies is likely to improve through the development of Action C5.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action has started according to the plans and a report summarizing information about the damage caused by carnivores will be available at the end of the project.

Action A8. Assessment of the availability and mortality causes of natural prey species

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2009

Progress

Italy - PNGSL: The census of wild boars, roe deer and red deer has been performed through direct observations from 23 April to 19 May.

Before the beginning of the field activities a preparatory meeting has been made with the 10 technicians that were recruited for the activity and with the staff of the local Forest Administration. The Forest Administration later could not participate in the field actions because all the staff was busy in the rescue and reconstruction actions after the earthquake in Abruzzo Region. The census has been done from totally 67 observation points, at dusk at dawn, covering an observable area of totally 75,53 km². During the census 63 Roe deer, 4 Red deer and 1254 wild boars were counted. The low number of red deer confirms the need for an additional observation session in late winter (February-March).

Regarding the assessment of reproductive nuclei of red deer the census sites and the calendars have been established, and the census will take place between 14 and 25 September.

For what concerns the traffic collisions with ungulates, the database of the Park for the year 2009 is being updated with the data that were gathered during the year.

In PNMS this action is not carried out because a wild prey assessment is already done in the frame of a three-year wild boar management initiative.

In PNATE the action will not be done because in this area a survey of species presence has been going on for the past 10 years.

Romania: In Romania, the staff of TUB FSFE was involved in winter time evaluations (December – March) of prey species together with students and local game wardens. This staff was also accompanied by representatives of Brasov and Covasna EPAs. During this period, the game wardens (6 persons) together with students from TUB FSFE (18 persons) have spent in the field 93 person/days on performing direct field observations at feeding places, passing routes and agricultural land as well as snow tracking. Thus, based on weather conditions, 4 teams formed by field staff and students made 20 snow-tracking routes in Sacele area, 18 in Dalnic area and 12 in Herculian - Cormos area. The estimates of population sizes were sent to the authorities (ITRSV - Regional Inspectorates for Forest and Hunting Regime) and the data regarding densities, concentration areas and feeding issues will be included in the action report.

In Bulgaria and Greece this action will not be developed because it concerns only wolves, whereas in these countries only actions targeting bears are developed

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing as foreseen and a report summarizing information about the presence and distribution of prey species will be available.

Action A9. Assessment of the distribution and numbers of wolves and bears

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2009

Progress

Italy: - PNGSL: In the first 9 months of the project wolf distribution and abundance has been estimated through the application of wolf howling technique. A systematic census

approach (*sensu* Harrington and Mech 1982) has been applied. In the study area 153 howling stations have been selected, and divided in 22 circuits. Each howling station has been censused for 3 consecutive nights. The systematic survey has been carried out from 10 to 29 of August by the staff of the park, technicians, and personnel of the CFS.

A technical training session was held the 6 of August in order to explain the sampling strategy and the modality of data collection.

Apart from the systematic survey additional howling sessions have been carried out (24/08-14/09) in order to better locate rendez-vous sites, and minimizing problems of double counts, related to the use of different rendez-vous site by the same pack during summer months.

A total of 12 wolf reproducing packs have been identified, and assuming that each pack may consists of 4-5 individuals, and adding a portion of transient individuals (15% of the population), a total estimate of 56-70 individuals may be expected to be present.

Concerning the monitoring of bears the locations where the fur traps for the collection of biological samples were identified and the materials to construction of the traps were purchased. The traps will be activated in autumn.

PNMS: In PNMS the assessments of wolf and bear presence have been subcontracted to a private association "Studio Faunistico Chiros". The selection of this subcontractor has been done from an official list of specialists that had previously been made by the Park according to national procedures.

The staff has started the wolf census in July by using wolf-howling techniques. Until now 5 sessions have been carried out and 10 more are foreseen until the end of August. As in PNGLS howling sessions are repeated for 3 nights from each station. Until now a total of 4 reproducing wolf packs have been identified.

Bear monitoring has started in spring. One video trap, 1 photo trap and 4 fur traps have been installed and all traps have been monitored for 8 subsequent nights by the staff of Chiros.

Different signs of bear presence have been collected until now, including tracks, photographs and damage on livestock.

PNATE: In the territory of PNATE the monitoring of the presence of wolves has started in July, also here through the application of the wolf-howling technique.

For the preliminary choice of the howling stations a set of grids with cases of 3 km side width was overlaid on the map of the study area. Among the grids the one was chosen opportunistically on which the biggest number of vertices fell in positions that were actually usable for wolf-howling sessions (good acoustics, lack of obstacles, easy access, easy location, dominant position etc.). Additional corrections were then made in order to improve the suitability of the howling stations. This resulted in a systemic sampling approach with opportunistic corrections. In July the survey has been made experimentally, with the howling emissions being made for 3 subsequent nights on 10 circuits that include 6 points each (totally 180 emissions).

Romania: The field persons and students involved in A8 action were also involved in this action. In addition, project staff and representatives from other institutions (NGOs and EPA Covasna) participated in early spring evaluations of large carnivores. The activities carried out were: direct observations at baiting sites for wolves in winter time, direct observations at feeding sites for bears in spring time, snow tracking of wolves in winter time and tracks analysis for bears in spring time. Thus, based on weather conditions, 4 teams formed by field staff and students made 20 snow-tracking routes in Sacele area, 18 in Dalnic area and 12 in Herculian - Cormos area). The results of these methods are combined in order to obtain a better view of the field situation. Additionally, this information was combined with other information such as: den areas for wolves and bears, prey species carcasses, human – wolves and bears encounters in project areas.

The results from spring census will be linked with the autumn campaign outputs and will be published in November 2009, as part of the activity report. The methodology implemented on the ground will be used also in the next years (action E5) in order to provide both to authorities and game managers a practical guide to estimate large carnivore densities.

Bulgaria: After the initial national meeting the preparation for assessment of bear distribution and numbers has started. A map with grid 7x7 km of the working areas has been

prepared. Starting from March bait for capturing bears and “hair traps” have been purchased and set up. All together 18 hair traps have been set and checked.

In April checking and preparation of trapping equipment has been carried out in order to capture and radio collar brown bears. At the end of May the trapping session for brown bear started in the Natura 2000 site Rodopi Zapadni - BG0001030 in RIEW Smolyan. There were no bears trapped, probably because there was enough natural food and the bait did not attract the bears. There were several observations in the area.

Greece: A first field survey on bear presence in the project area was carried out by two bear experts as part of the project personnel and was conducted from May 25th to June 15th, 2009. Some preparatory contacts with the local competent authorities (i.e. Forestry Services) were carried out by the task coordinator of the project for the actions dealing with brown bears, in order to inform them about the purpose of this action and the project goals in general. Given the total surface of the project area versus the available time frame which is related to the detectability of the bear signs, it was judged preferable to divide the survey period into two parts.

During the first part (already completed) the sectors with permanent bear presence (comprising 2 NATURA 2000 sites included in the project area that is: GR1440001 (“Aspropotamos”) and GRGR1440002 (“Kerketion oros”)) were covered and surveyed in priority. Systematic recording of bear signs of presence and activity in the aforementioned sectors was achieved by the two member crew during 22 field days. A total of eighty (80) bear signs of presence and activity were recorded of which 83% refer to footprints and track lines, 5% to excrements, 2% to tree marking and 10% to feeding activity. Hence the use of 2 automatic infra-red photo traps (cameras) helped in the identification of at least seven (7) different individuals present in the surveyed area. Field data have already been mapped using GIS software and first bear presence and distribution patterns have been visualised.

The second survey period is scheduled to be carried out between September 25th and October 25th, and will focus mainly on the third NATURA 2000 site of the project area (GR1440003 “Antixasia-Meteora”) where bear re-colonisation trends have been recorded during the previous years. The second survey period has been scheduled in such a way so as to allow a repetition in the already surveyed sectors in spring in order to optimize the sample by covering the same area in two different seasons characterized by different bear activity patterns.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The Action has started as foreseen and a report summarizing the results will be available.

Action A10. Development of a Geographical Information System

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

A GIS technician has been contracted by PNGLS, who is in charge of the development of the GIS database of the whole project. The technician was selected directly without public tender because the cost was below 12.000 EUR including VAT and the contract was for providing a good and not a service. He is now in the phase of collecting basic map material from the project partners. Simultaneously, during the development of Actions A7, A8 and A9 coordinates are collected of all the damage caused by carnivores as well as on all the signs of presence of carnivores and prey species. These data will be inserted in the GIS and used to produce the foreseen model.

The contracted GIS specialist for Romania produced the preliminary maps of the project areas that were used during field activities (actions A7, A8, A9). These maps will be upgraded based on 2009 field campaign and will be used for the implementation of next activities. In the next period, a data base linked to the GIS maps will be also produced.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing as planned and first thematic maps will be available at the end of the year.

Action C1. Training for general conservation actors in the target areas

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

Concerning Task C.1.1. two first experience exchange trips were done:

1. Two representatives of BWS (Bulgaria – Aleksandar Dutsov, Kostadin Valchev) and the Human Dimension consultant Ivayla Tasseva visited PNGSL from 26 to 29 April 2009. The aim of this trip was to allow both the Bulgarian and the Italian partners to exchange information about techniques for the trapping and monitoring of brown bears, as well as on methods to assess the presence and distribution of prey species.

Also, the Human Dimension expert has had the opportunity to exchange expertise and information with the staff responsible for Human Dimensions of PNGSL and with the staff of the University of L'Aquila, responsible for the Human Dimensions activities of the project.

2. The representative of TUBB (George Predoiu) has travelled to Portugal to visit the project of the former COEX Partner Grupo Lobo. Here he had the chance to gather information about techniques for the introduction of the use of valuable livestock guarding dogs into local flocks. On 21 – 22 September 2009, in Brasov, was held a training session for the project team that will work on the action C3 – Donation of LGD. Thus, based on the experience exchange trip and other information gathered in the last months, George Predoiu have trained 3 persons who will be involved in the next period in the implementation of C3 action.

Concerning Task C.1.2. the first foreseen training course for veterinaries and other technicians is being organized. It will take place in the first week of October in the territory of PNGS and it will bring together veterinaries and wildlife technicians from the Italian and international partner institutions as well as from local bodies responsible for wildlife management. A pool of specialists will teach about basic natural history of predators and prey, about damage prevention techniques and about veterinary techniques used to assess the occurred damage.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing as foreseen

Action C2. Stakeholder consultation and involvement

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.10.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

The practical part of the action has not started yet although the consultants for its development have already been identified and contracted in the different countries (please refer to the description of Action A5).

Greece: CALLISTO's member Mr. Vaios Koutis, who is inhabitant and native of the project area in Greece, made first contacts with some of the stakeholders and interest groups, for their involvement in the project activities implementation, namely the Forestry District Department and Local Governments in the project area, as well as the Trikala Prefecture's Development Company (KENAKAP). As a first result, a small "project office" started operating within the premises of the local Development Company "KENAKAP", for stakeholder consultation and involvement.

Problems and delays

As mentioned in the letter to the EC of 22 April 2009 the earthquake in Abruzzo Region has caused a delay of the whole package of activities about Human Dimensions research and involvement (A5, A6, C2 and E3). It might be that the delay of Actions A5 and A6 can be recovered, in which case Action C2 might start on time. However, a delay of few

months might also involve the present action. It is unlikely that such a delay will affect the project since there is sufficient time to recover the timing throughout the whole project period.

Action C3. Donation of electric fences and livestock guarding dogs

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

Italy: In Italy only PNMS will donate electric fences to farmers to reduce the damage caused on livestock and on bee-hives. The administrative procedures for the purchase of fences have started and the practical implementation of the action when data from Actions A7, A8 and A9 will be available.

Livestock guarding dogs (LGD) are not donated in this area because several dogs are already present in the livestock raising holdings.

In PNGSL the promotion of the use of LGD and electric fences has already been done in the frame of the LIFE COEX project.

In PNATE this action will not be carried out because it would be likely to double the efforts of upcoming Rural Development Plans.

Romania: During the development of action A7 it could already be observed that Romanian shepherds do not use specialized LGD, although most of them would like to use such dogs in the future. The reasons for such situation are various: lack of knowledge regarding dog breeders, poor economical conditions, etc. Under these circumstances, the project team has done the following activities: an assessment of existing situation in all project areas, identification of the most suitable shepherd camps to be initially included in this action, identification of the local dog breeders and types of dogs agreed by Romanian legislation, information collection about other similar activities in other EU countries, preparation of the dog breeding facilities (location, breeding site, food delivery). A visit has been made to one of the LIFE COEX countries (Portugal) (Action C1) in order to define all the questionable issues related to on the field implementation of this action. Also, during late winter and early spring 2010 will start purchasing LGDs that will be donated in late spring to the selected shepherd camps.

Bulgaria: All available data in the structures of MOEW about damage caused by brown bear is being collected and analyzed by a GIS Expert in order to define the areas with the highest concentration of bear attacks. During the trapping session we discussed with people who experienced bear damage what would be the most effective use of preventive measures such as electric fence, whether beekeepers who own small numbers of beehive in one neighbourhood would collect them closer to be protected by one el. fence. An assessment of Bulgarian producers of electric fence has been done and consultation with some of them is still going on.

Greece: As stated in the project proposal text the Greek government is planning to support financially the use of high-quality LGD as the provision of electric fences in the near future. That's why the associated beneficiary in Greece (CALLISTO) will encourage livestock owners, beekeepers and farmers to use this opportunity. No LGD or electric fences will be donated in Greece.

At present the negotiations between EC services and the Greek Ministry for Rural Development and Food (former Ministry of Agriculture) in order to include this measure into the new Agri-environment measures for the period 2007-2013 have been completed and the measures are expected to be in place within year 2010 or 2011. Following further contacts of the project team with public servants from the Greek Ministry for Rural Development and Food we have been informed that the Common Ministerial Decision was about to be signed in order to finalise the legal and practical aspects of their implementation. Nevertheless bureaucratic problems still occur as the financial formalities seem far from being solved at the moment.

Problems and delays

Romania: In the project budget there are not foreseen money for LGD purchasing. By reducing the costs for dogs breeding consumables and food for LGDs, we decided to purchase these dogs and include the costs on Other Costs Category.

Changes

It was decided that 15 electric fences will be purchased and donated to farmers instead of the 10 planned ones. This need arose due to following fact: it appeared evident that the Park territory has recently been recolonized by at least one bear (this species has been extinct in this area), and in the last months this individual has repeatedly damaged bee-hives in the area. It is extremely important that this kind of damage is reduced in order not to cause too significant conflicts with the local population. Therefore the need appeared to have the availability of electric fences to be installed for the protection of bee-hives. For this the budget for the purchase of electric fences will increase by 7.500 € (from 8.000 to 15.500 €), which will be spared from the purchase of equipment for Action C7.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is being developed as foreseen

Action C4. Development of a network of livestock guarding dog breeders and of livestock breeders

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

Italy: In PNGSL the first two potential members of the working group for the dissemination of the use of livestock guarding dogs have been identified. These members will be two livestock raisers of the area of L'Aquila, who are historically been pasturing their livestock in the area and have extensive experience with the use of livestock guarding dogs.

In PNATE this action will not be carried out because in this area the use of livestock guarding dogs is slowly being recovered by livestock raisers themselves and an interference of the present project is not necessary and might obstacle the natural process.

Romania: There is no direct connection between authorized LGD breeders and livestock breeders. Thus, most of the authorized LGD breeders are more interested in expositions and trading of dog pups with pedigree. During discussions and meetings with different LGD breeders, we have concluded that we should change our type of dog to be used in our LGD program. Thus, the contacted specialists and shepherds concluded that Ciobanesc Mioritic should be replaced by Ciobanesc Carpatin (lighter, attentive and more agile dog). In the next step, we identified the persons that breed the Ciobanesc Carpatin and are interested in collaboration with the project. Thus, Mr. Cosmeanu Ioan from project area (Covasna County) and Catalin Ionete from Dambovita County started to prepare together with project team the plan for donation and monitoring of LGD. On 8 November, during the National Championship for Romanian LGDs, the project team will meet the breeders and will inform them about project aims.

In Bulgaria this action will not be carried out since it addresses specifically wolves, which are not a target species in the Bulgarian project site.

Greece: In Greece, CALLISTO's member Mr. Vaios Koutis, who is inhabitant and native of the project area in Greece, made first contacts with some of the shepherds and livestock raisers in the project area who use livestock guarding dogs. Mr. Koutis was member of the project teams in previous LIFE projects implemented in the area, dealing with large carnivore conservation (LIFE96NAT/GR/003222 and LIFE97/NAT/GR/4249), so he has a good knowledge of potential members of the Network under development in Trikala Prefecture.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives:

The action is being developed as foreseen

Action C5. Development of long-term damage monitoring action plans

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.03.2012

Progress

Italy: PNMS has invited the local authorities responsible for the management of wildlife damage (Regional government, State veterinary Authority and Forest Agency) to a common meeting. The scope was to harmonize the data collection about the damage caused by wolves and bears on livestock, in the vision of the problem explained in Action A7 (the Park collects data about damage only in the area on the territory of Umbria Region). The meeting was started by a presentation of the EX-TRA Project by the project manager, and then by a series of presentations about the situations of wolves and bears in the park, the techniques foreseen for the damage assessment and the needs of the Park in this context.

A discussion followed in which the representatives of the Regional Government of Marche Region were asked how a potential cooperation could be made official in order to allow the staff of the Park to access the data gathered by the regional government.

The meeting has been fruitful but it was obvious that it was one of a series of upcoming efforts to further uniform the data collection and compensation procedures across the Park territory.

In PNGSL and PNATE damage monitoring plans already exist. Therefore PNATE will have only a function of consultant for the other partners in case of need, whereas PNGSL will be involved only since its staff will organize the training courses foreseen in Action C1.

Romania: Based on the results and experiences gained during 2009 field campaign, in the next period we will finalize the first draft of the plan that will be distributed for consultations within the Large Carnivore Working Group for Romania. The revised version will start to be implemented next season (2010) and will be presented to the authorities in 2012.

Bulgaria: BWS has organised several meetings with MOEW and Environmental Executive Agency to apply on practice Bulgarian brown Bear Management Plan and to organize centralised data collection in the EEA. At the moment there is new regulation on preparation for generalised data base in the EEA as a part of National Monitoring System. BWS members are part of the control committee.

Greece: In Greece, ELGA, the Greek Agricultural Insurance Organisation is responsible since 1963 for compensation of damages on agriculture by all kinds of natural causes (weather, wild animals, sickness, etc.). Therefore, implementation of this Action in Greece, including the project area, means mainly development proposals for improvement of the insurance regulations for brown bear and of the techniques used for the damage assessment by the ELGA's inspectors. For achieving this, CALLISTO has already made a contact with the central headquarters of the National Organization for Farmers' Compensation (ELGA) in order to obtain the digital data base on the yearly bear damage declared and compensated in the project area. After implementation of the Action "A7 - Preliminary damage assessment" CALLISTO will develop a technical report including specific proposals on the insurance regulations and the techniques used for the damage assessment. This technical report will be forwarded to ELGA and negotiations will start for its adoption by the Organisation.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives:

The action is being developed as foreseen

Action C6. Bear emergency team

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

In the frame of the LIFE COEX a Bear Emergency Team has been developed by Prof. Djuro Huber of the University of Zagreb, Croatia. Mr. Huber has been contacted by the partners of the LIFE EX-TRA project and invited to function as a consultant for the development of the BET's in the project countries. This will probably be done both by

performing a training course in Croatia and through individual visits of Mr. Huber to the different project sites.

Italy: The first meetings have taken place between the technical staff of PNGSL and PNMS in order to establish the common action plan for the implementation of the BET.

As stated in the project PNGSL and PNMS will set up a common BET coordination group, which will intervene, if necessary, according to a protocol that will be shared by the two bodies. From the operative point of view, however, the BET activities will be carried out by two separate action teams, which will be nominated by each of the parks. Therefore the BET will be made of a common protocol and coordination group but two separate teams and two sets of equipment.

Romania: An off-road vehicle has been purchased, which will be used for the activities of the Romanian BET. The rest of needed equipments (tranquilizing kit and starting consumables) had already been purchased by TUB FSFE during 2008 (not in the frame of the LIFE EX-TRA project). The special transport trailer will be locally build based on a detailed design provided by other similar projects.

The personnel of TUB FSFE involved in this action were selected in April 2009. Also, 16 more persons from all over the country were selected, who will participate in the BET trainings foreseen for autumn 2009. These persons come from various institutions such as: EPA – Environmental Protection Agencies, AGVPS – Hunters Association, ROMSILVA – Forest State Administration, NGOs (Pro Ursus Foundation, Asociatia pentru Conservarea Valorilor Naturii, WWF Romania, Milvus, etc.), research institutions (ICAS – Forest Research and Management Institute). The training curricula and practical training activities were discussed with Romanian experts and will be also discussed with international experts.

After the training courses, a national level group will be formed and MoUs with national authorities will be signed in order to ensure the same level of intervention all over Romanian territory.

Bulgaria: Preliminary arrangements for training experts working in National Parks and Regional environmental inspectorates have been done. Following this the Bulgarian BET already had some activities: A young 1,2 year old male bear was rescued from an illegally set trap on 30.04.2009. The bear was fitted with GPS-GSM collar and monitoring of its activity is ongoing. A compact and still powerful dart gun was purchased. The BET experts participated in assessments of damaged beehives, livestock and one human conflict in 8 settlements.

Greece: The Bear Emergency Team in Greece consists of a four member team comprising one veterinarian, one veterinarian assistant and two bear experts. All necessary consumables in order to maintain a complete veterinary kit for all cases of emergency have been purchased. A cage has been according to specific capacity, operation and safety standards, capable of hosting bears in cases of emergencies of transportation to a safer place (for handling) or to a veterinary facility. A 40 pages bear emergency protocol has been developed, covering all possible scenarios and cases of bears situations and behaviours and relevant intervention strategies and practices.

So far the team has successfully intervened in 3 cases.

Problems and delays

Greece: The approved provisional cost of the BET was limited to 9.370 EUR during the project proposal revision procedure. All personnel costs were eliminated from the relevant budget of the Action. After discussions made within CALLISTO this was accepted, provided that a relevant activity would be financed by a second LIFE project, in which CALLISTO participates in parallel, as associated beneficiary (PINDOS/GREVENA project - LIFE07 NAT/GR/000291). The four persons who are now staffing the BET in the PINDOS/GREVENA LIFE project offered themselves to participate on a voluntary basis in operations performed in the EX-TRA project area (Trikala), which is adjacent to the LIFE07 NAT/GR/000291 project area (Grevena). Unfortunately, the final personnel cost approved within the PINDOS/GREVENA LIFE project was minimised to 10.000 EUR. This amount is not adequate to finance the BET activities for a period longer than one year. Therefore,

CALLISTO is obliged to restrict the BET activities in both projects at a one-year period of interventions. To overcome this problem, CALLISTO continues its efforts on fund-raising, for covering its own financial contribution commitment to the project as well as for securing additional funds that will allow operation of the Bear Emergency Teams for at least two more years.

Changes

It had initially been planned that the project staff involved in the BET would travel to a place where BETs are already in place. During the first steering group meeting it appeared however reasonable for some partners (especially Romanian and Bulgaria) to have an expert, who has already worked on this topics, to their respective project areas, in order to assist them in locally bound issues such as developing protocols with the local authorities, organizing the practical interventions etc. This will be more fruitful for these partners, who have already expertise in the handling of bears but need assistance in more political and regionally specific issues.

Italy: It had initially been foreseen that PNGSL and PNMS would share a BET also from the operative point of view (same intervention group). However, during operative discussions it resulted that one single team will not be sufficient for the whole territory of the two Parks, wherefore it was decided that two separate intervention groups will be created, each with its own equipment. This means that one additional tranquillizing gun and one gun for cracker shells will have to be purchased. Therefore the “durable goods” budget of this action will increase by 3.000 EUR. This amount will be made available by the fact that in Action C7 funds will be spared for the purchase of radiocollars for red deer (for more detail please refer to the “changes” section of Action C7).

Romania: Since the equipment for the BET has already been purchased in 2008 (it was previously needed), these equipments costs - tranquilizing kit (gun, rifle scope, box) – 4000 EUR will be not included in the project budget. Based on future project developments, these costs will be replaced by other equipment for which need will appear in the upcoming year.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing according to the plans and first agreements have been taken for the implementation of BETs.

Action C7. Actions to increase the availability of wild prey

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 30.09.2012

Progress

Italy - PNGSL: The first steps for the release of red deer were undertaken. The release sites were identified, according to food availability, cover, human disturbance, presence of stray dogs and accessibility for the release and monitoring activities.

An agreement was prepared for a purchase of red deer individuals from Foreste Casentinesi National Park, and the first Red deer were released in the second half of September.

PNMS: First preparatory activities were made for the release of 10 red deer in the Park territory by the end of 2009. A first survey has been made in a wildlife area in Marche Region for checking the suitability of Red deer to be released in the Park. In addition, negotiations are proceeding with the Regional Government to agree on capturing, transport and release of the animals in the most appropriate manner.

In PNATE this action will not be carried out because the activities carried out by the Park in the past ten years have resulted in a significant ungulate population.

Romania: We have started to carry out activities that will contribute to proper management of prey species: patrols formed by TUB FSFE students and field personnel monitored the project areas and starting from July, in 4 selected locations started to be build feeding facilities for prey species and observation towers. These activities will be intensified

in the next years in order to obtain an increasing of prey densities and to provide a working and tested model to Romanian natural resources managers.

In Bulgaria and Greece this action will not be carried out because it would be relevant for wolf conservation whereas in these countries the project addresses only bears.

Changes

In PNMS 7.500 € of the budget of durable goods will be spared in this action because some red deer that will be introduced will be receive for free, and because economy will be made on the purchase of the radiocollars. This budget will be used to purchase additional electric fences for Action C3 and for the purchase for the equipment of the BET (Action C6). This change will not negatively affect the outcome of the project because it will still be possible to purchase sufficient equipment for the BET.

Actions D1 and D2 have not started yet

Action D3. Website and discussion forum

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

The Association “Società Cooperativa Alveo” has been contracted for the development of the website. The contract was made upon direct selection, which is possible according to the Italian law due to the fact that the total cost is below 12.000 EUR including VAT and that the contractor provided a tool and not a service. The subcontractor is presently working on the design of the website, whereas the project partners are in the phase of writing and translating into the various national languages the website texts. Following is the site map:

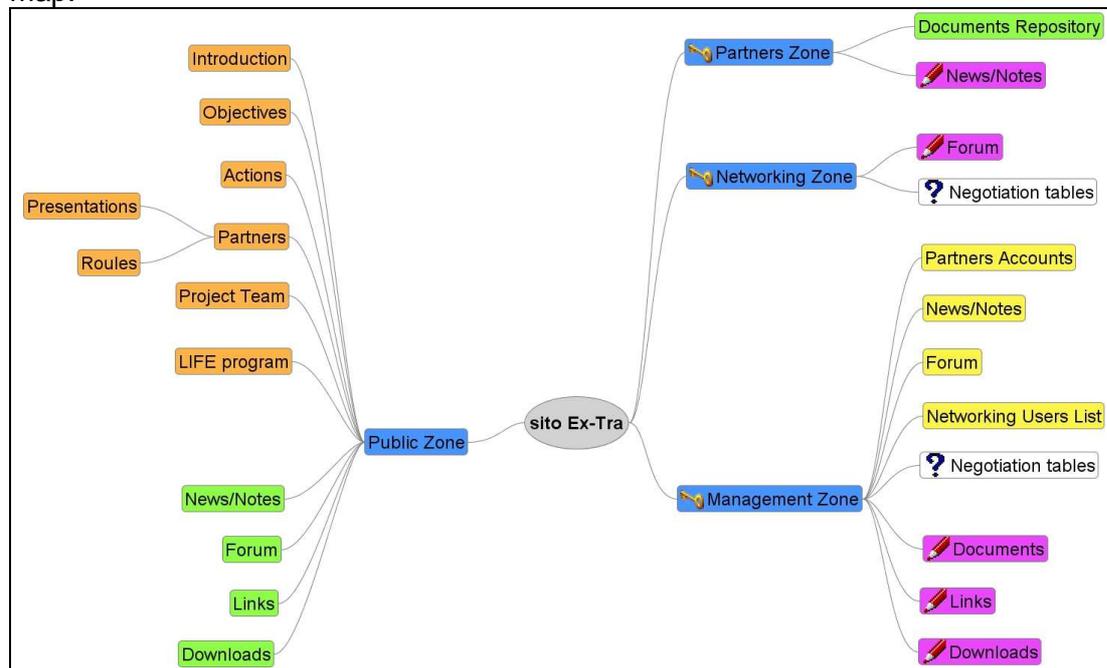


Figure 2. Site map of the LIFE EX-TRA website

The site will include a discussion forum, which will be used for exchange of information with other people working on the same issue and also for the development of Action E6 (Networking with other LIFE Projects).

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing as planned and the website will be online by the foreseen deadline.

Action D4. Layman's report and information panels

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.04.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

A Romanian graphic company (Green Steps) has been subcontracted with a direct selection procedure in order to prepare the layouts of several products, including the information panels. This layout was made available to all the beneficiaries, which could choose to use it or to adapt the panel to their specific needs.

The info panels are installed in the crucial places where the general public has access: Headquarters of protected areas, along specific trail, near tourist attractions, in buildings of public administrations etc.

A project logo has been designed by the graphic of PNGSL.

Changes

It was initially planned that the info panels are made of wood. However, during the planning of the installation of these items it appeared more reasonable to make more panels than initially foreseen, but to make them on other materials such as heavy paper (cardboard). This makes more sense since there is not one single place of intervention where the panels could be installed, the project being developed in several large areas. Having several panels, which can also be moved, will make it possible to install them when there is the specific need.

Deliverables

Annex II.5. Information panels

Annex II.6. Project logo

Action E1. Project management by Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

The project coordination activities have started right at the beginning of the project, with the identification of the components of the various working groups in the partner institutions.

Table 1. Staff involved in the EX-TRA project

	Internal coordinator	Administrative staff	Technical coordinator
PNGLS	Pina Leone	Mario Camilli Rosaria Lunadei	Federico Striglioni
PNMS	Alfredo Fermanelli	Roberta Emili	Alessandro Rossetti
PNATE	Willy Reggioni	Patrizia Rubertelli Erika Sacchelli	Francesca Moretti
TUBB	George Predoiu	Anica Vatavu	Dieter Simon
BWS	Aleksandar Dutsov	Tamara Konstantinova	Kostadin Valchev
MOEW	Kristio Popov	Financial Department	Kristio Popov
CALLISTO	Spyros Psaroudas	Klairi Kountouri	Fotis Anastasiadis

The following persons were specifically contracted for the project:

PNGLS: 1 project manager, 1 financial manager, 1 technical coordinator for field activities, 1 technician for field work, 3 veterinaries

PNMS: 1 veterinary (external assistance)

PNATE: 4 technicians

TUB FSFE: 1 Internal coordinator

BWS: 1 coordinator, 1 technical assistant for office and field work organisation, 2 LC experts and 2 field researchers.

CALLISTO: 1 National Coordinator, 1 Technical-Administrative coordinator, 1 Scientific Coordinator – Chief Scientist, 4 Bear Experts, 1 Veterinarian, 1 Veterinarian Assistant, 2 Researchers, 1 HD expert, 2 Environmental Information-Education experts, and 1 GIS expert (totally: 15 persons).

The project manager keeps constant contact with all the representatives of the associated beneficiaries of the project and makes sure that actions are carried on and products delivered timely.

The financial manager keeps track of the financial development of the project and makes sure that all the expenditures and the financial statements are done according to the rules of the Common Provisions and of the internal project guidelines.

As foreseen a first budget revision has been done. The beneficiaries have been instructed to proposed budget changes that could be done within specific restrictions posed by the internal project management rules. These proposed changes are inserted into a specific database that allows to quickly assess whether the total changes exceed the thresholds established by the Common Provisions (30.000 € and 10% of the budget line). The modified budget was then analysed by the financial manager and approval about the proposed changes were provided by the financial manager and the project manager.

Two first financial statements have been done by all the project partners. They have sent to the financial manager the filled-in financial reporting tool and all the paper documentation relative to the reported expenses. The material has been examined by the financial coordinator and changes/integrations have been requested.

The project has been visited by the representative of the external monitoring team, Mr. Sandro Angiolini on the 04-06 June 2009. A presentation of the progress and problems of the project was given but the Italian project representatives, and the first financial statement was revised.

On the second day a visit of the territory of PNGLS was done in order to show Mr. Angiolini the setting in which the project takes places.

In Romania the visit of the monitoring officer Gabriela Staicu was done in 15 June 2009. During the visit, the LIFE monitoring officer visited the project office in Brasov and the project area Dalnic located in Covasna County. In this project area, together with project representatives were visited shepherd camps where there have been reported damages caused by wolves and bears.

In Greece, on 9 May 2009, the external monitor in charge (Ms. Georgia VALAORAS, Astrale), visited the project area. The National Coordinator (Mr. Spyros PSAROUDAS) and the project's Local Assistant in Kalambaka (Mr. Vaios KOUTIS) organised and participated in the visit. On the morning, several administrative issues were discussed. Later on, a visit to the project area was organised and details on the implementation of the project activities were reviewed.

Comparison with planned outputs and objectives

The action is progressing as foreseen. The necessary staff is active and the coordination is progressing well.

Actions E2 to E5 have not started yet.

Action E6. Networking with other LIFE Projects

Timing of the action: Start date – 01.01.2009; end date – 31.12.2012

Progress

A database of persons working on LIFE projects (and other projects) about large carnivore conservation has been set up by all the project partners. Upon their permission all

these people will be put on a mailing list and invited to participate at the discussion forum on the project website as soon as it will be ready.

In July 2009, the Romanian project activities were presented to the participants by George Predoiu (conference speaker) at the Regional conference organized by ALPARC – Alpine Network of Protected Areas and CNPA – Carpathian Network of Protected Areas. The conference was held in Slovakia (Nizske Tatry National Park) and was attended by about 80 participants from Carpathian and Alpine countries.

Actions E.7 and E8 have not started yet

Timing of the action: After end of project

Progress

Action has not started yet

4.2 Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

In Bulgaria BWS applied for official permission to trap, tranquilize, fit with collars and transport bears on the territory of the whole country. The license was issued February this year valid for the next 4 years until the end of the project

In Greece, CALLISTO is specialised in Conservation of Large Carnivores. The NGO has established in previous years a close cooperation with the National Competent Authority (Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food, General Directorate for Development and Protection of Forests and the Natural Environment), which is responsible for the relevant licences. Cooperation with local Forestry District Departments already exists, too. A permit for bear handling and radio-tagging for telemetry and research purposes (in the frame of the "Monitoring of Egnatia highway construction impact upon bear populations in N.Pindos) was issued in the name of NGO "CALLISTO" by the aforementioned authority in 2008 and is valid until 31.12.2009. The project area of the aforementioned project partly encompasses the LIFE-EXTRA project area. A renewal of the aforementioned permit will be required from the Ministry in 2010.

4.3 Envisaged progress until next report, until April 2010

The upcoming reporting period foresees the development of the following activities:

- A2: Continuation of coordination meetings at national level
- A3: Second steering group meeting, to be held in Romania in February 2010
- A4: Finalization of the best practice manual
- A5, A6: Conclusion of the stakeholder analysis and of the attitude surveys and summarizing the results in a technical report
- A7: Conclusion of analysis of damage on livestock, including collection of data from previous years, and summarizing in a technical report
- A8: Autumn survey of Red deer during rutting season
- A8: Update of database about traffic collisions with ungulates in PNGSL
- A9: Activation of fur traps for bears, and collection of samples
- A9: Snow-tracking activities for the assessment of wolf distribution
- A9: Bear monitoring through radio-telemetry
- A10: Finalisation of GIS and production of preliminary thematic maps that show potential conflict areas
- C1: First training course for technicians about the assessment of carnivore damage on livestock, and experience exchange trips
- C2: Start of actions to involve stakeholder – organization of first discussion tables
- C3: Purchase of first electric fences
- C3: Purchase and donation of first LGD
- C4: Coordination meetings with livestock and dog raisers to be included in the network of livestock guarding dog breeders

- C5: Meetings with local authorities for the development of the monitoring action plans
- C6: Training course in Croatia about BET and training for BETs in project countries
- C6: First workshops for the implementation of the BET protocols
- C7: Release of first Red deer in PNGSL and PNMS
- C7: Provide extra food for prey species during winter time in all project areas.
- D1, D2: Beginning of translation and adaptation of educational materials and school education kit about wolves
- D3: Project website will be put online and the first newsletter of the project will be ready for download from the website
- E1: Regular financial reports will be done
- E2, E4, E4: Follow-up monitoring activities of damage on livestock and prey and predator densities will be started
- E6: Mailing list of contacts from other projects will be started

	Actual																	
C.5 Development of long-term damage monitoring action plans	Planned			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Actual																	
C.6 Bear emergency team	Planned			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Actual																	
C.7 Actions to increase the availability of wild prey	Planned			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Actual																	
D. Public awareness and dissemination of results :																		
D.1 Public information campaigns about large carnivores	Planned					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Actual																	
D.2 Information campaign for local farmers about optimal management techniques	Planned					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Actual																	
D.3 Website and discussion forum	Planned		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Actual																	
D.4 Layman's report and information panels	Planned		X	X	X					X	X	X			X	X	X	
	Actual																	
E. Overall project operation and monitoring:																		
E.1 National and international project coordination	Planned	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Actual																	
E.2 Monitoring damage caused by wolves and bears on livestock	Planned					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Actual																	
E.3 Follow-up surveys on the perception of the stakeholder groups	Planned											X	X	X	X	X		
	Actual																	
E.4 Monitoring wild prey abundance	Planned					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Actual																	
E.5 Monitoring large carnivore densities	Planned					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Actual																	
E.6 Networking with other LIFE Projects	Planned	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Actual																	
E.7 External audit	Planned																	X
	Actual																	
E.8 After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Planned																X	
	Actual																	

5. Financial part

5.1 Putting in place of the accounting system.

Project budget fine tuning and PB support tools

A monitoring tool for recording the requested budget shifts was put in place, allowing to assure the respect of ruled thresholds.

A second tool was created in this sense, i.e. a helpdesk system (by e-mail and by phone) for all the project beneficiaries in order to support their individual budget management, giving advices on administrative and financial aspects in order to guarantee a sound commitment of the project resources.

Another instrument for building up a smooth financial implementation of the project is the drafting of a handbook on “administrative and financial management rules” which, taking on board the different juridical framework in the different countries, is able to safeguard a common standards-based – and shared – management system for any beneficiary. This handbook is under revision and confrontation with each beneficiary, and it is forthcoming to be uploaded in the project website. Within the different issues the handbook deals with, the settlement of a separate accounting system for managing the LIFE EXTRA project is the first advice towards the beneficiaries.

A specific PowerPoint presentation was prepared as a summary of such a handbook, and it is used to train the staff of the beneficiaries on such topics. The financial manager is going to visit each beneficiary to implement a specific training session on it.

Last element of the system has been the creation of a network between the project financial manager and one person of each beneficiary, responsible for financial issues. This network is constantly in touch for spreading guidelines, for setting deadlines, for answering to questions, etc.

Accounting system

Every beneficiary (including the coordinating beneficiary) has set up an accounting system for an efficient management of the LIFE project resources. This system follows the principles of sound management and traceability of financial flows, and it is structured to allow the implementation of all the different issues linked with financial resources: funds commitment, payments settlements, expenditures monitoring, expenditures reporting. It is composed of a juridical framework (official acts/decrees for creating the financial items, identification of involved staff, etc.), an electronic data management system (actually part of the already existing body’s accounting system), and a structured archive of all the accounting documents (receipted invoices, timesheets, etc.). The juridical framework depends on the beneficiary national legislation.

The electronic financial data management system depends on the beneficiary own accounting system: the main distinction is that the financial flows regarding the LIFE EXTRA project are distinct (through separate financial items, specific code, etc.) respect all the other financial flows.

The paper documents archive is structured following the budget structure (Cost Categories) and the “procedure” trail relevant to each beneficiary. PNGSL has set a specific accounting system for managing the project resources, in order to track in a distinguished way both their arrival in its budget and to manage them, either for its individual expenses or for beneficiaries’ advances and/or reimbursements.

Expenditures reporting

At the beginning of the project it was decided (and included in the Partnership Agreements) that the occurred expenditures have to be reported to the coordinating beneficiary every 4 months, and a fixed timeframe has been set. It means that every May,

September and January each PB has the possibility to report the occurred (in the previous months) expenditures in order to demonstrate the project advancement.

Every financial report includes an electronic and paper version of the Financial Reporting Tool and all the relevant documents (timesheets, pay slips, travel receipts, subcontractor invoices, etc.), and this documents are stored in the coordinating beneficiary archive. Each financial report is assessed by the project financial manager – using an ad hoc checklist – and formally “approved” by him; this approval is the starting document for settling the payment of the reimbursement to the NGOs, and for including such expenditures in the foreseen reports to the EC.

Besides the required constraints cost-category based, the financial manager imposed to the beneficiaries also the monitoring of occurred expenditures also in relation with actions, as recommended by the EC. A specific tool for this was created, and the beneficiaries must send it together with the financial reporting.

5.2 Continued availability of co financing.

Due to the recent world economic recession, potential sponsors of CALLISTO changed their initial promising position and adopted a non-committal attitude. Therefore, the project administration intensified the relevant efforts. The World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA - see <http://www.wspa.org.uk/>) decided to offer a 4.400 euros financial support to the project activities in Greece for 2009. For the rest of CALLISTO's commitment, the Greek Ministry for Environment, Land Planning and Public Works has already agreed for contributing financially to the project. Unfortunately, the announcement of early National Elections for next October (4/10/09) has delayed the official Ministerial Decision. To overcome this problem, CALLISTO continues its efforts on fund-raising, for covering its own financial contribution commitment to the project as well as for securing additional funds that will allow operation of the Bear Emergency Teams for at least two more years.

All the other beneficiaries of the project confirm their continued availability of cofunding as foreseen in the approved project budget.

5.3 Costs incurred (summary by cost category and relevant comments).

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 31.08.2009	% of total costs
1. Personnel	1.094.372	101.833	9,31
2. Travel and subsistence	269.640	12.775	4,74
3. External assistance	490.748	35.178	7,17
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure			
Equipment	210.210	44.902	21,36
Prototype			
5. Land purchase / long-term lease			
6. Consumables	67.150	1.786	2,65
7. Other Costs	109.330	2.642	2,42
8. Overheads	356.991	12.763	6,41
TOTAL	2.241.810	199.116	8,88

There were no significant budget discrepancies so far. The only cost category in which a relatively high percentage of the budget was spent is the “durable goods” cost category. However, this is reasonable since it is at the beginning of the project that most of the purchases of equipment are done, which will then be used for the implementation of the project actions.

In one action more was spent than initially foreseen for the whole project. This is action A.1 “preparation of administrative and legal background”. This major expenditure was done by PNGSL, which has spent a higher amount of personnel costs than initially thought. This is explained by the fact that after the earthquake in Abruzzo Region two persons of the administrative staff have quit their position (due to personal problems) and after that many administrative duties (initially calculated in overheads costs) had to be fulfilled by the technical staff. The budget for this will be taken from action A3, which has almost been concluded but budget for staff costs is still available. PNGSL is now in the process of renewing the staff of the administrative section.

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
A.1	3.960	12.990	-9.030	9.030
A.2	11.661	8.666	2.995	11.661
A.3	19.836	7.937	11.899	14.766
A.4	9.875	1.319	8.556	9.875
A.5	48.255	25.487	22.768	48.255
A.6	14.735	2.169	12.566	14.735
A.7	69.816	12.856	56.959	69.816
A.8	69.005	15.309	53.696	69.005
A.9	108.565	19.116	89.449	108.565
A.10	31.085	1.395	29.690	31.085
C1	70.670	3.698	66.972	70.670
C.2	121.320	3.287	118.033	121.320
C.3	116.130	532	115.598	116.130
C.4	64.425	33.184	31.241	64.425
C.5	24.826	229	24.597	24.826
C.6	158.760	5.365	153.395	158.760
C.7	181.386	345	181.041	181.386
D.1	121.975	1.195	120.780	121.975
D.2	49.255	2.665	46.590	49.255
D.3	35.035	5.665	29.370	35.035
D.4	19.460	4.655	14.805	19.460
E.1	372.877	27.769	345.108	372.877
E.2	51.320	0	51.320	51.320
E.3	29.195	0	29.195	29.195
E.4	90.110	0	90.110	90.110
E.5	328.273	3.283	324.990	328.273
E.6	0	0	0	0
E.7	20.000	0	20.000	20.000
Total	2.241.810	199.118	2.042.692	2.241.810

5.4 Other administrative issues

VAT status of CALLISTO (Greece)

In the letter of 29.06.2009 the LIFE Unit asked clarifications about the VAT status of the associated beneficiary NGO CALLISTO, Greece. According to the declaration provided by this NGO (Annex III) this organization is theoretically under VAT regime and therefore able to recover VAT. However, in practice given its not-for-profit and non-commercial character, recovering VAT can actually happen only occasionally and as an exemption to the general rule. According its Articles (Article 9 - Legal status) "CALLISTO never acts as a commercial entity, of any kind. For major details please refer to the annexed declaration.

Question letter to Desk Officers

On 28.08.2009 a question letter was sent to the financial and technical desk officers at the LIFE Unit, for which a reply was received on 03.09.2009. The results of this exchange can be summarized as follows:

- The Desk Officers confirmed that experience exchange trips to the LIFE COEX countries (Portugal, Spain, France and Croatia) are eligible under the condition that changes to the original budget does not exceed by more than 10 % / 30.000 €.
- A trip of the project partners to Croatia for attending a training course for Bear Emergency Teams is eligible under the same conditions.
- The personnel costs of the Greek associated beneficiary CALLISTO can be accounted in the "personnel" category, although these costs are paid with an invoice and not upon production of pay slips. This is the case because it is customary for NGOs in Greece to use persons hired only for one or more projects, including LIFE ones. Specifically the staff members of CALLISTO sign project contracts for each project they are involved in. They are paid issuing an invoice for each payment -- "Apodeixi Parochis Ypiresion" in Greek.
- It was confirmed that the costs for "prestazione occasionale" in Italy can be accounted in the "personnel" category provided that the employer is able to proof the payment of the salary, social security and taxes and that the person in question fills in timesheets for all the time worked
- It was confirmed that the purchase of a second hand off-road vehicle (10.000 EUR) by the Bulgarian associated beneficiary BWS is eligible.

Problems in financial reporting

The visit of the external monitor Mr. Sandro Angiolini (June 2009) revealed two problems in the financial reporting that had been made by then:

- The time sheets of Mr. Aleksandar Dutsov of the Bulgarian associated beneficiary BWS were wrongly filled in because, although the time sheet reported that the position was full-time, not all working hours (for duties other than the LIFE EX-TRA project) were reported. This mistake has been corrected in the meantime.
- Not all the invoices of "durable goods" and "external assistance" costs reported reference to the project (LIFE07NAT/IT/000502). This problem appeared because in some cases the shops where the items were purchased had an automatic system for the issue of invoices which does not allow to insert a project reference. It was decided that in such cases a stamp with the project code will be put on the invoice and the order of purchase, which will bear the project reference, will be delivered as annex to the invoice.

During the visit the request was made to deliver, with the present report, a summary table that explains which actions will be carried out in which project areas. This table can be found in Annex IV.

6. Annexes

- I. Partnership agreements
- II. Deliverables
- III. VAT declaration of CALLISTO, Greece
- IV. Table of project actions in different project areas
- V. Monitoring indicators