

IMPLEMENTATION OF MIRE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LATVIA

LIFE04NAT/LV/000196



FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

Covering period September 1st 2004 – October 31st 2005



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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Project

The project aims in realizing the priority conservation and management activities set by the Mire Habitat Management Plan for Latvia. It is the first habitat management plan for Latvia and outlines the priority areas in urgent need of management activities - Cena, Stikli, Klani and Veseta Mires that are included in the project. The sites are nationally and internationally important as include habitats and species of EU Concern as well as protected habitats and species of Latvia. Cena Mire and Stikli Mires are included in the List of Important Bird Areas of Europe. The total area of the project sites - comprises 10808 ha from which 501ha are under critical need of management. In total 14 habitats (7110*, 7120, 7140, 7160, 3130, 3160, 9010*, 91D0*, 9080*, 3260, 6410, 6210, 6430, 6450) and 14 species of the EC Habitat Directive Annex I and Annex II are known in the project sites, including 4 priority habitats (7110*, 9080*, 91D0*, 9010*). Habitats harbour 28 species in the EC Birds Directive Annex I from which 2 are priority bird species (*Crex crex*, *Aquila pomarina*). In the project sites the active raised bog habitats have been damaged by drainage and the restoration of the natural hydrological regime is needed.

1.2. Objectives of the Project as defined in application

The objectives of the project:

- secure the best possible conservation status of priority habitats and species of Community importance;
- involve local society and stakeholders in the conservation and management activities;
- raise public awareness and enhance the understanding of the current nature conservation issues, habitats of EU importance and Natura 2000 network.

The main actions and means involved:

- elaboration of management plans for the 4 project sites that include a complex range of habitats, threats and interests in accordance with national requirements;
- raising of water level by building dams on the drainage ditches for the restoration of raised bog habitats (7110*) that are losing their nature conservation value;
- management transition mires and quaking bogs (7140) and Fennoscandian mineral-rich springs and spring fens (7160);
- management of forest habitats Western taiga (9010*) and *Tetrao urogallus* leks;
- establishment of habitat monitoring points to ensure the successful restoration activities of these prospective Natura 2000 sites;
- organization of seminars for all interest groups and an International seminar “Raised bog conservation and management” to present the project results;
- publishing of informative materials and guidelines on habitat management and conservation.

As a result of the project 19 priority actions are carried out to prevent the threats for the habitats and species of Community importance.

Practical results of the project include:

- four management plans and regulatory documents elaborated and approved;
- active raised bog restoration measures implemented in 3 project sites (320 ha of raised bog restored), 91 ha of transition mires and quaking bogs and 1 ha of Fennoscandian mineral-rich springs and spring fens maintained, 61 ha of western taiga managed);
- people educated about the conservation and nature values of the project sites;
- experience exchanged and lessons learnt, especially for protected area managers.

In the realization of the project activities 16 partners that include Riga Forest Agency, State Joint-Stock Company “Latvia’s State Forests”, Forest Research Station, Nature Protection Board, Ventspils Regional Environmental Board, 8 municipalities, Latvian State Forestry Research Institute “Silava”, Olaine Museum of History and Art will be involved.

1.3. Overview of main conservation issues being addressed

Negative influence from drainage, peat extraction and fire

Raised bogs are influenced by drainage that was carried out all over Latvia between 1930s and 1980s. Drainage has affected the natural raised bog succession, leading to the reduction of the open mire habitats. In the project sites - Cena Mire, Stikli Mires and Klani Mire, the drainage system is still functioning. Most affected are the margins of the mires. The desiccation of the raised bog habitats has taken place due to the runoff through the drainage ditches. Also peat extraction takes place in the area bordering with the protected part of Cena Mire. Therefore, peat fields possess a continuous threat due to the fires that have occurred there.

Degradation and consequent loss of raised bog habitats

The field studies of the project sites show that on mire margins the natural raised bog vegetation has been replaced by degraded vegetation with low species diversity. As a consequence, near the marginal ditches the typical raised bog species composition has disappeared. Due to drainage, the damaged parts of the raised bogs greatly differ from the intact areas. Drainage results in drying, compaction, oxidation, wastage and a changed water-table response pattern to rain events.

Overgrowing of transition mires by shrubs and pine

At the beginning of the 19th century, the natural course of Veseta River bed was changed. The field investigations show that the encroachment of shrubs and pine takes place in Veseta River Floodplain Mires Nature Reserve in such a manner threatening the growth of *Saxifraga hirculus*, *Liparis loeselii*, and *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* – species EU Habitats Directive. Also the transition mire and quaking bog) as well as Fennoscandian mineral-rich spring and spring fen habitats are endangered due to the invasion by shrubs and pine trees.

Unfavourable succession in valuable forest habitats of Western taiga

Pine forests of Western taiga have become overgrown by spruce, mainly due to the melioration activities, carried out during 1960s – 1970s. Both the structure of communities and living conditions of a number of species of high conservation concern has been influenced unfavourably. The forests of Western taiga in the Stikli Mires Nature Reserve are valuable as they include 5 *Tetrao urogallus* lek sites. Due to the spruce undergrowth, breeding of *Tetrao urogallus* is endangered because the species can use only open forest areas as lek sites, therefore removal of the undergrowth is essential.

Uncontrolled recreation activities

Unmanaged recreational pressure has a considerable impact on habitats through trampling and pollution. Recreational damage in Stikli Mires, Cena Mire and also Klani Mires includes fires, hunting, trampling of footpaths, and vehicle damage from off-road vehicles, fishing and berry picking. As a result, the active raised bog, forest habitats of Western taiga have been altered.

Lack of awareness of nature conservation issues

Local inhabitants living nearby the protected nature areas often have limited awareness about nature conservation issues and the value of the habitats of EU importance in the area they live in. Therefore, it is important to raise public awareness and stress the biological value of the habitats and species that are found in the raised bogs, as well as other habitats of EU importance. Raising public awareness by education materials and informative meetings, as well as building nature trails, will facilitate the conservation process.

Section 2. SUMMARY

2.1. Summary of the activities during report period

The Project „Implementation of Mire Habitat Management Plan” started in September 1, 2004. This is the First Progress Report where action by action the progress of each activity from September 2004 until October 2005 is described.

During the report time the following activities are being implemented:

1. Elaboration of management plans and regulatory documents (A1)
2. Hydrological investigations for the preparation of technical designs for building dams (A2)
3. Elaboration of technical designs for nature trails and watching towers (A3)
4. Organization of price quotation (A4)
5. Making agreements and signing contracts (A5)
6. Monitoring site hydrology and the effects of management measures on habitats and species (D1)
7. Organization of seminars (E1)
8. Preparation and publishing of informative booklets about the project sites and the LIFE Project (E2)
9. Creation and updating of the home page of the Project (E5)
10. Production of audio-visual materials (E6)
11. Participation in study tours, seminars and other meetings (E10)
12. Project administration (F1).

Most of the work has concerned the elaboration of management plans (A1), hydrological investigations for the preparation of technical designs for building dams (A2), monitoring site hydrology and the effects of management measures on habitats and species (D1), raising public awareness on raised bog and fen values, including organizing seminars and meetings with the 16 project partners and private landowners. Home page has been regularly updated with the latest events of the Project. The progress of the Project is described in the following sections of the Report. Additional information, like copies of the agreements, published articles and informative leaflets, copies from the TV programs are attached in the Annex 1 – 30.

2.2. Summary table of activities

Action	Number of action	Time plan	Status in October 2005
Elaboration of management plans and regulatory documents	A.1.	I 2005 – II 2006	4 management plans under preparation
Hydrological investigations for the preparation of technical designs for building dams	A.2.	IV 2004 – III 2005	1 technical design for Cena Mire is completed, 2 are under preparation
Elaboration of technical designs for nature trails and watching towers	A.3.	I - IV 2005	2 technical designs for nature trails and 2 towers are under preparation
Organization of price quotation	A.4.	IV 2004 – I 2005; I 2006; I – III 2007	Accomplished in July 2005, next planned to be delivered in time
Making agreements and signing contracts	A.5.	IV 2004 – I 2005	16 agreements signed with the project partners and 4 with subcontractors
Construction of dams and restoration of natural raised bog hydrology	C.1.	II – IV 2006; II – IV 2007; II – 2008	-
Construction of watching towers	C.2.	III – 2006; III – 2007	-
Removing shrubs and pine	C.3.	III – 2006	-

Management of forest habitats	C.4.	II – III 2006	-
Construction of nature trails	C.5.	III 2006; III 2007	-
Monitoring site hydrology and the effects of management measures on habitats and species	D.1.	II 2005 – IV 2008	120 groundwater wells are installed and 130 monitoring relevés made
Organization of seminars	E.1.	IV 2004 – II 2005; III 2006; II 2007; I – III 2008	Accomplished in February 2005, next planned to be delivered in time
Preparation and publishing of 5 informative booklets about the project sites and the LIFE project	E.2.	II 2005; III 2006; I 2007; III 2007; I 2008	1 st booklet - February 2005, (in Latvian) August 2005 (in English), next planned to be delivered in time
Arrangement of nature trails	E.3.	II – III 2006; II – III 2007	-
Establishment of information boards	E.4.	II – III 2006; II – III 2007	-
Creation and updating of the home page of the project	E.5.	IV 2004 – IV 2008	Home page regularly updated with the latest information about the project actions
Production of audio-visual materials	E.6.	II – III 2005; II – III 2006; I – III 2007; II – IV 2008	Film is currently produced about the project sites and actions
Organizing Raised Bog Conservation Day	E.7.	III 2007	-
Elaboration of educational pack for teachers	E.8.	IV 2006 – I 2007	-
Preparation and publishing of Guidelines on habitat and species conservation and management	E.9.	II – III 2008	-
Participation in study tours, seminars and other meetings	E.10.	IV 2004; II – III 2005; II 2006; III 2007; III 2008	4 study tours organised in Latvia and 3 abroad, participation in 2 seminars and 1 conference
Preparation of Layman's report	E.11.	III – IV 2008	-
Project administration	F.1.	IV 2004 – IV 2008	Project team established and all the actions carried out
Independent audit of the project	F.2.	IV 2005; I 2007; III – IV 2008	-

2.3. Milestones during report period and checklist of identifiable products

2.3.1. SUMMARY OF PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone	Nr of actions	Planned	Date of completion
Price quotation organized for Action A2	A4	October 2004	November 2004
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action A2	A5	November 2004	January 2005
Seminar in Riga organized	E1	December 2004	December 2004
Steering Committee established	F1	January 2005	January 2005
Information for the web page prepared	E5	January 2005	October 2004
Seminar in Ventspils organized	E1	January 2005	February 2005
Seminar in Jaunkalsnava organized	E1	February 2005	February 2005
Price quotation organized for Action E6	A4	April 2005	June 2005
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action E6	A5	May 2005	October 2005
Price quotation organized for Action C1	A4	April 2006	-
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action E3	A5	April 2006	-

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Agreement made and contracts signed for Action E4	A5	April 2006	-
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action C1	A5	May 2006	-
Price quotation organized for action C2	A4	July 2006	-
Price quotation organized for Action C5	A4	July 2006	-
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action C2	A5	August 2006	-
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action C5	A5	August 2006	-
Interim Seminar in Riga organized	E1	September 2006	-
Nature trail in Cena Mire completed	E5	October 2006	-
Watching tower built in Cena Mire	E4	October 2006	-
Information boards placed in Cena Mire	E4	October 2006	-
Mid-project Seminar organized	E1	May 2007	-
Nature trail in Stikli Dizpurvs Mire organized	E5	September 2007	-
Watching tower built in Stikli Dizpurvs Mire	E4	September 2007	-
Raised Bog Conservation Day organized	E7	September 2007	-
Price quotation organized for Action E9	A4	April 2008	-
Agreement made and contracts signed for Action E9	A5	May 2008	-
International Seminar on bog restoration organized	E1	June 2008	-

2.3.2. SUMMARY OF DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Product	Number of actions	Planned	Date of completion
The first booklet published (in Latvian and English)	E2	June 2005	February and August, 2005
3 technical designs for the raised bog hydrology restoration prepared	A2	November 2005	1 technical design for Cena Mire is completed, 2 are under preparation
Management plan for Cena Mire prepared	A1	February 2006	Draft management plan prepared
Management plan for Veseta River Floodplain Mire prepared	A1	February 2006	Draft management plan prepared
Management plan for Stikli Mires prepared	A1	March 2006	Draft management plan prepared
Management plan for Klani Mires prepared	A1	March 2006	Draft management plan prepared
2 technical designs for the watching towers prepared	A3	January 2006	2 technical designs under preparation
2 technical designs for nature trails prepared	A3	January 2006	2 technical designs under preparation
The second booklet published	E2	September 2006	-
Educational pack for teachers prepared	E8	February 2007	-
The third booklet published	E2	March 2007	-
The fourth booklet published	E2	September 2007	-
The fifth booklet published	E2	March 2008	-
Guidelines on habitats and project sites published	E9	August 2008	-
One video film produced	E3	August 2008	Film is currently produced
Layman's report published	E9	September 2008	-

2.4. Problems or difficulties

There are neither major problems nor delays in the Project. Still, there is little experience in Latvia about hydrological studies in the mires, restoration of mire hydrology and the practical aspects of building dams on drainage ditches. To overcome the lack of experience study tours were organised to learn the experience of the other LIFE projects, both in Latvia and abroad.

During the last year after the accession to EU there has been an increase in petrol price. It may lead to the increase of the costs for some project actions that include travel expenses, building of dams on drainage ditches, nature trails and towers.

Section 3. TECHNICAL REPORT (BY ACTIVITY)

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or action plans

ACTION A.1:

Name of action: Elaboration of management plans and regulatory documents

Time plan: I 2005 – II 2006

Progress: According to the Latvian legislation the procedure for the elaboration of the management plans has several stages. The Management plan Advisory Groups were organized by the Nature Protection Board to monitor the process of the elaboration of management plans. Participants from Municipalities, Regional Environmental Boards, Nature Protection Board, forestry's, stakeholders, private landowners, NGOs, other interested persons or institutions are included in this group. Before and after the Management Plan Advisory Group meetings with the help of press releases, the regional mass media is informed. Information is also published in the project home page.

Elaboration of the management plans was started in December 2004 when the First Introductory seminar for the Project and management plan was organized. The elaboration of management plans for the other 3 sites started in January 2005.

Management plans for the project sites are prepared in accordance with the Latvian legislation “Law on Specially Protected Nature Territories” (02.03.1993.), Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers “On the General Protection and Use of Specially Protected Nature Territories (No 415/ 22.07.2003), Instructions of the Ministry of Environment “Recommendations for Development of Nature Conservation Plans” (No 120/ 04.07.2002).

At the start of the elaboration of management plans November 2004 meeting for the management plan experts was held where the experts were introduced with the procedure for the elaboration of management plans that includes several stages according Latvian legislation and requirements of LIFE Project.

State Joint Stock Company „Latvia’s State Forests” finances the elaboration of management plans and regulatory documents for Stikli Mires Nature Reserve. The Nature Protection Board finances the elaboration of management plan and regulatory documents for Klani Mire and Veseta Floodplain Mire Nature Reserves. Riga Forest Agency finances elaboration of management plans and regulatory documents for Cena Mire Nature Reserve. Management plan and regulatory documents for Veseta River Floodplain Mire will be ready in December, 2005. Management plans and regulatory documents for Stikli Mire, Klani Mire and Cena Mire will be ready in the first quarter of 2006.

Information for press

Information was prepared for press about the informative meetings of the project and the start of the elaboration of the management plans as well as about other Project actions and the basic information about the Project. Depending on the type of the activity the press releases are sent to central and regional mass media (printed and electronic media or published on the home page of the Latvian Fund for Nature. Until October, 2005 there have been 17 publications in the printed mass media, 2 TV shots and more than 20 publications in news agencies and internet portals. The number of contacts in printed media increases 903`560. Most of the printed papers include photos. Information about publications in press

is revealed in Annex 9. Special attention was paid to the regional media. There is an agreement about regular cooperation with two Project partners (local municipalities) that in their local publications the Project education activities will be revealed. Several publications for the regional newspapers are also under preparation about the Project areas and nature values there.

Informative meetings

According to Latvian legislation informative meetings during the elaboration of the management plans were held for Cena Mire on 21.12.2004 (34 participants), Veseta Floodplain Mire (21 participants), Stikli Mires 21.02.2005 (31 participants), Klani Mire 21.02.2005 (31 participants).

Participants were introduced with the EC LIFE Project „Implementation of Mire Habitat Management Plan for Latvia” and the main activities, other LIFE projects in Latvia, elaboration of management plans in Latvia. The management plan experts introduced with the main nature values in territories. Project partners told about their interests and contribution in the project.

Reports (Draft Management Plans) from the management plan experts

At present the Management Plans for the project sites – Cena Mire and Veseta Floodplain Mire, Stikli Mires, Klani Mire are under preparation.

According to management plan elaboration instructions all the known information about territories is summarized and inventory of species and habitats is carried out. According to the agreements with the Project partners who finance the elaboration of the management plans, the **First Reports** about the progress of the elaboration of the management plans were submitted for all the Project sites - Cena Mire 30.05.2005, Veseta Floodplain Mire 31.05.2005, Stikli Mires 27.06.2005, and Klani Mire 30.05.2005.

The **Second Reports** of management plans were submitted after the field work was carried out and the new information added to the Draft Management Plans. According to the agreements with the project partners the Second Reports of the management plans were submitted for Cena Mire on 01.09.2005 and Veseta Floodplain Mire 01.09.2005; for Stikli Mires have to be finalized until 01.12.2005, but for Klani Mire until 01.12.2005.

In the Draft management plans the management actions for the project sites are described and were discussed in the Second meetings of the Management Plan Advisory Groups. The management plans include information on legislation, evaluation of biodiversity values, factors influencing the site and management activities.

The management activities are shown on maps of Project sites, habitat maps are prepared, as well as maps with the location of the places, where activities will be carried out (Annex 10).

Experts and territory inventories

Every management plan is directed by the management plan expert who summarizes the information from the field experts. The inventories have revealed new species and habitats, especially for invertebrates which have been found before. New species of EU importance were found in the Project sites - 3 in Veseta River Floodplain Mire, 3 in Klani Mires, 1 in Stikli Mires (Annex 11). In total 14 habitats (7110*, 7120, 7140, 7160, 3130, 3160, 9010*, 91D0*, 9080*, 3260, 6410, 6210, 6430, 6450) and 14 species of the EC Habitat Directive Annex I, and II are known in the project sites, including 4 priority habitats (7110*, 9080*, 91D0*, 9010*).

Field work was started in 01.03.2005 by the ornithologist and was continued until September by other experts. Reports from field experts were submitted until 15.08. and 01.10. Report about *Tetrao urogallus* leks must be submitted till 01.12.2005.

Meetings of the Management Plan Advisory Groups

According to the Latvian legislation at least 3 meetings of Management Plan Steering Groups for each of the Project sites must be organized. The **First Reports** from the management plan experts were sent to every participant of the Management Plan Advisory Group one

week before the meeting. All the private landowners were personally invited the meeting by sending invitation letters.

The First meetings of Management Plan Advisory Groups were held for Cena Mire Nature Reserve in 04.07.2005 (22 participants), Veseta Floodplain Mire Nature Reserve 05.07.2005 (22 participants), Stikli Mires Nature Reserve in 08.07.2005 (30 participants), Klani Mire Nature Reserve in 07.07.2005. (28 participants). Participants were introduced with all the known information about the Project sites and with results of first inventories. Discussion about different problems was started. Suggestions and objections of private landowners and stakeholders were discussed and explanation of various problems was given.

Also the **Second Reports** (Draft Management Plans) about the elaboration of the management plans were sent to every participant of the group one week before the meeting and all the private landowners were personally invited to take part in this meeting as well.



Visit of the managements Plan Advisory Group to Vasenieks Mire (Photo by Agris Abolins)

The Second meetings of the Management Plan Advisory Groups were held for Cena Mire Nature Reserve in 28.09.2005. (13 participants), Veseta Floodplain Mire 04.10.2005. (13 participants), Stikli Mires Nature Reserve 07.10.2005. (26 participants), Klani Mire Nature Reserve 06.10.2005. (16 participants). The main subject of discussion was the management activities in the territories and forestry management restrictions. The first drafts of different zones in territories were discussed.

Preparation of the management plans is the duty of the main habitat expert and management plan experts. Field experts (ornithologist, botanist and habitat expert etc.)

are involved in the data collection for the management plans.

One portable computer was bought for the preparation of management plans. Four-wheel drive car is used for the site visits during the data collection for the 4 management plans.

Variations/complications/delays: Due to the presence of valuable forest habitats of EU Habitats Directive in the process of the preparation of the List of the prospective Natura 2000 sites the total area of the two project sites has been increased – Veseta Floodplain Mire from 121 ha to 424 ha and Klani Mire from 1057 ha to 1615 ha. Therefore, the management plans for these areas are elaborated for larger area. Still, this does not need additional finances for these project sites as the total area of this LIFE project has not increased.

Additional information: Annex 1 – 8 - Programs of the Management Plan Advisory Group meetings in, Annex 9 – Press review, Annex 10 – Maps of the Project sites, Annex 11 – Annex 12 – Photos of the Project sites, Annex 13 - Photos of the project actions.

ACTION A.2:

Name of action: Hydrological investigations for the preparation of technical designs for building dams

Time plan: IV 2004 – III 2005

Progress: In order to carry out the restoration of the active raised bog in the drained parts of Cena Mire, Vasenieku Mire from Stikli Mire Complex and Klani Mires, the existing bog hydrology has been assessed. Technical designs for building dams on drainage ditches are prepared in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers regulations Nr. 382 “The order of building of melioration systems and hydro-technical constructions”. Technical designs are elaborated by the sub-contractor “Meliorprojekts”, supervised by the manager of the main activities.

For the elaboration of the technical designs for building dams, the official procedure was followed. First of all the tasks for the elaboration of technical designs were set up, then

technical regulations for building were obtained, then environment technical regulations were obtained from the nature protection boards and finally – the permissions for building of dams on the drainage ditches. Only when all these documents were obtained from, then official permissions could be obtained.

At present technical design for building of dams is elaborated for Cena Mire, but for Vasenieku Mire from Stikli Nature Reserve and Klani Mire are still under preparation although all the field studies are completed. The technical designs include maps with the location of dams, information about their construction and size.



Groundwater wells in Cena Mire (Photo Mara Pakalne)

Hydrological studies are carried out in the areas where the dams will be built. Estimation of groundwater flow directions in the raised bog was carried out by analyzing the topographic maps and the leveling of the mire surface. For elevation purposes the Trimble GIS equipment is used. In total, 120 groundwater observation wells were established. From them – 52 in Cena Mire, 28 in Stikli Mires and 40 in Klani Mire. The perforated plastic tubes with the lengths of 2 m and diameter of 10 cm are used as a material for the wells. Aerial maps and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) for the site management are used as well.

Dutch expert Jan Streefkerk has been invited from June 24-26, 2005 as a consultant and expert in building dams.

Variations/complications/delays: After organising of the price quotation for the preparation of the technical designs for building dams, the cost was slightly lower than it was planned in the project. This money will be used for other actions as there is an increase of the price for petrol.

Additional information: Annex 10 – Maps of the Project sites with the location of management areas and location of dams for Cena Mire. Annex 13 - Photos of the project activities.

ACTION A.3:

Name of action: Elaboration of technical designs for nature trails and watching towers
Time plan: I - IV 2005



Levelling of Vasenieku Mire for building of nature trail (Photo by Mara Pakalne)

Progress: Under this action technical designs are currently prepared for building of 2 watching towers and 2 nature trails in Cena Mire, Vasenieku Mire from Stikli Mires Nature Reserve. Field trips were carried out to evaluate the best route for the nature trails in Cena and Vasenieku Mire from Stikli Mires Nature Reserve. Representatives from Project partners and experts participated in this work.

The field studies and expert suggestions have revealed that the best route in Cena Mire would be on the southern part of Cena Mire, near Skaists Lake not to disturb the bird species. The route includes also raised bog and fen habitats. The nature trail is on the

margin of Cena Mire to avoid damaging the most vulnerable area of the sites. For the safe location of the nature trails, geological studies, including the peat depth to evaluate the exact

location of the nature trails and watching towers, have been started along the routes of the nature trails.

Variations/complications/delays: After the discussions with the Project Partners and the field work carried out by project experts - ornithologists, habitat experts it was suggested to change the route of the nature trails in Cena Mire Nature Reserve and Stikli Mires Nature Reserve because in this case the raised bog habitats and bird species would be least disturbed. Now both the routes are planned on the raised bog margins and the contrast between the degraded and intact raised bog habitats is clearly observed for the public. In Vasenieku Mire at the route it will be possible to observe the restoration of raised bog hydrology as it passes the area where the dams will be built on the drainage ditches.

Additional information: Annex 10 – Maps of the Project sites with the location of the routes of the nature trails in Cena Mire and Vasenieku Mire from Stikli Mires Nature Reserve. Annex 13 - Photos of the project activities.

ACTION A.4:

Name of action: Organization of price quotation

Time plan: IV 2004 – I 2005; I 2006; I – III 2007

Progress: Price quotations were organized before the project actions. The first price quotation was organized for action A2 (Hydrological investigations for the elaboration of technical designs) from 22.11.2004. till 17.12.2004. Invitations were sent to three institutions – “Meliorprojekts”, “Hidro – Laveri” and “VISKO”. All these institutions have a license of hydrology and designing of hydrological buildings and registration card. Only one organization responded to our invitation – “Meliorprojekts”. Two institutions – “Hidro – Laveri” and “VISKO” did not respond to the price quotation.

The second price quotation was before the action E6 (Production of audio-visual materials). Film Studio „elm media” and Kaspars Goba with the co-producers won it and now are working for film. For the price quotations Terms of Reference were prepared and contained a set of requirements needed for the actions to be carried out, also methods and resources as well as the final result will be identified.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Documents of the 1st and 2nd price quotations are in Annex 14.

ACTION A.5:

Name of action: Making agreements and signing contracts

Time plan: IV 2004 – I 2005

Progress: During the period, from October 2004 till May 2005, 16 agreements were drawn up and signed with the project partners. Preparation of the agreements was assisted by a lawyer.

In total four agreements were prepared and signed also with the sub-contractors for the following actions A2 (elaboration of technical designs for building of dams on drainage ditches), E6 (production of audio-visual materials). Agreements with sub-contractors are prepared after receiving the proposals from the price quotations.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Annex 15 – 16 - Copies from the agreements with project partners and sub-contractors.

C. Non-recurring management

ACTION C.1:

Name of action: Construction of dams and restoration of natural raised bog hydrology

Time plan: II – IV 2006; II – IV 2007; II – 2008

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION C.2:

Name of action: Construction of watching towers

Time plan: III – 2006; III – 2007

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION C.3:

Name of action: Removing shrubs and pine

Time plan: III – 2006

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION C.4:

Name of action: Management of forest habitats

Time plan: II – III 2006

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION C.5:

Name of action: Construction of nature trails

Time plan: III 2006; III 2007

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

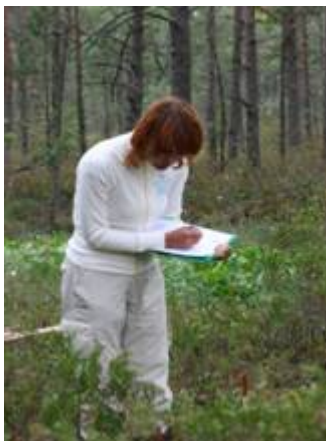
D. Recurring management

ACTION D.1:

Name of action: Monitoring site hydrology and the effects of management measures on habitats and species

Time plan: II 2005 – IV 2008

Progress: Habitat and hydrological monitoring is carried out in all the 4 project sites where building of dams and habitat management is planned. The methodology described in the Handbook for Mire Monitoring in Latvia is applied that is based on plant species and structure monitoring in permanent plots. In 2005 (July - September) permanent plots were established next to hydrological monitoring plots, in places where vegetation changes are most likely to occur before the planned management actions take place in 2006. There are 38 monitoring plots on ditches in the raised bogs, twenty monitoring plots in raised bogs (7110*, 7120) and four monitoring plots in transitional mire (7140). The number of permanent plots depends on the size of management area in each site. Monitoring scheme includes also control plots. Plant species composition and the percentage cover are evaluated. The size of the plots is 1x1 m. There are 3-5 plots within the larger 10x10 m relevé. The wetness of the sites was recorded and includes surface water evaluation; identification of adjacent pools and *Sphagnum* dominated vegetation. In total there are 130 monitoring plots.



Setting monitoring relevés before the management actions (Photo Mara Pakalne)

Hydrological and habitat monitoring is integrated. In the plots, water level measurement is carried out. Habitat expert together with hydrologist monitors the habitats analyses the hydrological data on the groundwater level measurement.

Habitat changes are also be monitored using on-site photographs taken in order to compare the state of habitats before and after management. Observation points for habitat and ground water level measurements will be marked by GPS (Geographical Positioning System).

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Annex 17 – Number of the monitoring plots in the project sites and an example from the monitoring field data form.

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results

ACTION E.1:

Name of action: Organization of seminars

Time plan: IV 2004 – II 2005; III 2006; II 2007; I – III 2008

Progress: At the beginning of the project, 3 one-day introductory seminars were organized in the three project areas (Riga, Ventspils and Jaunkalsnava). During the seminars the participants were informed about the start of the project, its objectives and planned activities as well as contacts established between all the stakeholders and partners who are involved in the various project activities. Seminars were organized in co-operation with the partners of the project – Riga Forest Agency, Ventspils Regional Environmental Board and Forest Research Station who provides the facilities for the seminars. In seminars participants were informed about the start of the elaboration of the management plans for all the 4 project sites – Cena Mire, Stikli Mires, Klani Mire, and Veseta Floodplain Mire.

There were also discussions about tourist guides for the nature trails, hunting mammals and birds and the changes of borders for Cena Mire Nature Reserve.

- 1) **In December 17, 2004** the First Introductory Seminar was organized for the stakeholders and the project partners of Cena Mire Nature Reserve.
- 2) **In February 21, 2005** the Second Introductory Seminar was organized for the stakeholders of Veseta River Floodplain Mire Nature Reserve.
- 3) **In February 22, 2005** the Third Introductory Seminar was held in Ventspils for the stakeholders of Stikli Mires Nature Reserve and Klani Mires Nature Reserve.

The **First Seminar** of the project was held in Marupe Municipality and was attended by 34 persons from 16 institutions. Representatives from the following institutions participated in the meeting - Nature Protection Board, Marupe Municipality, Olaine Museum of History and Art, Babite Municipality, Riga Forest Agency, Joint Stock Company „Olaines Kudra”, University of Latvia, Ltd „Ergla ligzda”, Nature Link International, Latvian Museum of Natural History, Latvian Ornithological Society, Babite Forestry, Tirelu Forestry, Riga Regional Environmental Board, Latvian Fund for Nature.

The **Second seminar** of the project was held in the Forest Research Station (Jaunkalsnava). The following representatives participated in the meeting (21 persons from 12 institutions): Nature Protection Board, Madona Regional Environmental Board, Forest Research Station, Latvian State Forestry Research Institute „Silava”, Vietalva Municipality, Aiviekste Municipality, Kalsnava primary school, administration of Teici Strict State Reserve, The State Forest Service, Aizkraukle District Council, Latvian Fund for Nature. This seminar was organized as introductory of project and as information to the stakeholders and to the project

partners of Veseta Floodplain Mire. All the project partners informed about their activities in the project.

The **Third Seminar** of the project was held in Ventspils Regional Environmental Board. The following representatives attended the meeting (31 persons from 19 institutions): Nature Protection Board, State Joint Stock Company „Latvia’s State Forests”, Ventspils Regional Environmental Board, Pope Municipality, Puze Municipality, Usma Municipality, The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia, Pope Forest District, Usma Forest District, University of Latvia, Talsi District Council, Targale Municipality, The State Forest Service, Latvian Ornithological Society, Slitere National Park, household „Ievakalni” (private land owner) and Latvian Fund for Nature.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Programs of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd seminars in Annex 18 - 20.

ACTION E.2:

Name of action: Preparation and publishing of 5 informative booklets about the project sites and the LIFE project

Time plan: II 2005; III 2006; I 2007; III 2007; I 2008

Progress: In February, 2005 the first informative booklet about the LIFE Project was published (5 000 copies in Latvian). The booklet includes information about the LIFE project, aim and objectives, main actions and expected outcomes, as well as nature values of the Project sites, habitats, flora and fauna and threats. The English version of the Project booklet was issued in August 2005 before the LIFE Coop seminar that took place in Latvia in August 22-23, 2005. It was distributed to more than 100 participants from 13 countries. The English version was printed in 2000 copies. Both the information leaflets are also available in electronic format in the home page of the Latvian Fund for Nature.

Variations/complications/delays: The First informative booklet was delivered earlier than planned – already in February 2005, but second in English - in August.

Additional information: Annex 21 - Informative booklets of the project in Latvian and English.

ACTION E.3:

Name of action: Arrangement of nature trails

Time plan: II – III 2006; II – III 2007

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION E.4:

Name of action: Establishment of information boards

Time plan: II – III 2006; II – III 2007

Progress: The information for the Project posters “Vegetation studies, habitat monitoring and managements in Cena Mire” and “Hydrological and vegetation studies in LIFE “Mire” project in Latvia”, which has been prepared for the participation in international seminars (Action E.10), will be used also for the preparation of the information boards and signs that will be set in the Project sites. The work including data summary has been started.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Annex 24 – Posters of the project.

ACTION E.5:

Name of action: Creation and updating of the home page of the project

Time plan: IV 2004 – IV 2008

Progress: Information about the project and its sites – Cena Mire, Stikli Mires, Klani Mire and Veseta Floodplain Mire, as well as habitats and species of EU concern (active raised bogs, Western taiga, transition mires and quaking bogs, etc), their management and monitoring activities is prepared for the home page of the Latvian Fund for Nature (<http://www.ldf.lv>).

The information for the home page is both in Latvian and English. The home page is regularly updated with the information about project activities, photos of the habitats and species of EU Importance.

Home page is linked with the home pages of other protected areas, the Ministry of Environment, project partners and co-financiers, nature conservation and forest authorities and other Latvian LIFE-Nature projects.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: Printouts from the home page are in Annex 22.

ACTION E.6:

Name of action: Production of audio-visual materials

Time plan: II – III 2005; II – III 2006; II – III 2007; II – IV 2008

Progress: The production of the video film about the Project has been started. The aim of popular science film is to show that mires are significant part of the nature diversity, as well as that mires are the only possible habitat for many species of plants, animals, birds and insects. The goal of the film is to educate society about diversity of the mires and their meaning nature, about habitats of European importance, necessity of their protection. The film is intended as documentary story about the variety of mire habitats in Latvia.



Shooting film about the project by Kaspars Goba (Photo Mara Pakalne)

The stress in the film is on priority habitats – active raised bogs 7110*. The film will include also the information on transition mire and quaking bog (7140), Fennoscandian mineral-rich spring and spring fen (7160), alkaline fen (7230), lake (3130, 3150, 3160) and forest (9010*, 91D0*, 9140*), *Molinia* Meadow (6410) habitats as well as plant species – *Saxifraga hirculus*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Hamatocaulis vernicosus*.

Use of aerial photographs, combined photographs and 3D graphics* in combination with regular follow up to LIFE project activities, interviews and other materials the film will become an educational work which will tell

about the variety of mire habitats in Latvia, the necessity of their protection, about problems which influence the mires negatively and about possible solutions for those problems.

The film will consist of several separate parts, telling both about the Latvian mires in general, types of mires, habitats observed there, factors influencing mires and possible problem solutions, and also a detailed look at the 4 LIFE project sites – Cena Mire, Veseta Floodplain Mire, Stikli Mires and Klani Mire. The film is prepared in two languages – Latvian and English and will be completed at the end of the project in September 2008, allowing the producers of the film to follow all LIFE project activities in all project territories.

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION E.7:

Name of action: Organizing Raised Bog Conservation Day

Time plan: III 2007

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION E.8:

Name of action: Elaboration of educational pack for teachers

Time plan: IV 2006 – I 2007

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION E.9:

Name of action: Preparation and publishing of Guidelines on habitat and species conservation and management

Time plan: II – III 2008

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

ACTION E.10:

Name of action: Participation in Study tours, seminars and other meetings

Time plan: IV 2004; II – III 2005; II 2006; III 2007; III 2008

Progress: Four Study tours to the LIFE projects in Latvia were organized:

- 1) In November, 2004 the first one-day visit to the Teici Nature Reserve was organised where the LIFE Nature Project „Measures to ensure the nature conservation management of Teici Area” (LIFE00 NAT/LV/007127) is successfully carried out;
- 2) In April, 2005 one-day visit to the Kemeru National Park to the LIFE project “Conservation of wetlands in Kemeru National Park, Latvia” (LIFE02 NAT/LV/008496), to know about the management actions carried out within this LIFE project;
- 3) In May, 2005 one-day visit to the Pape LIFE project „Lake Pape-Conservation, Preservation and Evolution” (LIFE03 NAT/LV/000081) where mire restoration actions are planned. Information about building of nature trails and towers was obtained;
- 4) In July, 2005 one-day visit to Lubana LIFE project „Management of the Lubana Wetland Complex” (LIFE03 NAT/LV/000083). During the study visit information was obtained about the project management, building of towers, nature trails, building of dams in Lubana Wetland Complex.

In August 17, 2005 an excursion for the expert group consisting of 25 people from the Polish LIFE project “Conservation of Baltic raised bogs on Pomerania, Poland” (LIFE04 NAT/PL/000208) were guided to Cena Mire by the project manager Mara Pakalne and manager of the main activities Juris Nusbaums. During the excursion, there were discussions and experience exchange on mire restoration methods in Poland and Latvia.

There were also 3 Study tours organised abroad for the Project staff and representatives from the Project partners:

- 1) In May, one-day visit was organized to the Nigula State Nature Reserve, Häädemeste, Tolkuse and Maasika Bogs where LIFE-Nature project was carried out. The trips included visits to the area where nature trails and towers are already built in Estonia.

- 2) From June 2 – 5, 2005 study tour to Lithuania was organized. During the study tour several protected areas were visited, like Kamanos Nature Reserve, Dzukija National Park, Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve and Cepkelius Nature Reserve. Experience learned in building of dams in Kamanos Nature Reserve.



Field discussions in a restored mire in Seitseminen National Park in Finland (Photo Mara Pakalne)

- 3) From July 11-17, 2005 a study tour was carried to Finland. It was for the project team to visit the LIFE-Nature project sites where the successful restoration of the active raised bogs was carried out in. Project team members (4) and representative from the project partner organization – Nature Protection Board participated in the study tour. The trip was guided by Dr. Tapio Lindholm and included various LIFE project sites, such as LIFE project „Management of Wetlands along the Gulf of Finland. Migratory flyway (2003 –

2007)” (LIFE03 NAT/FIN/000039), Seitseminen National Park, LIFE project „Restoration of Active Raised Bogs, Aapa Mires and Bog Woodland (1996 – 1999)” (LIFE96 NAT/FIN/003025), visit to Lakkasuo Mire, Vihriäisenneva and Konilammensuo restoration sites, field trip to Siikanneva, Liesjärvi National Park, Soukonkopi restoration object, visit in the exhibition of mires at Hämeen luontokeskus, field trip to Torronsuo National Park, Puurijärvi – Isosuo National Park (birds watching tower and problems of succession in wetlands). During the trip in Finland the LIFE Project sites where mire restoration is carried out were visited. For more details see the home page of the Latvian Fund for Nature (Annex 22).

Participation in seminars

1. First workshop of the LIFE coop Project "Dissemination of ecological knowledge and practical experiences for sound planning and management in raised bogs and sea dunes" (LIFE2003NAT/CP/NL/000006) in Aalden, the Netherlands, October 5-8 October 2004 (<http://www.barger.science.ru.nl/life/>). In the workshop Project manager Mara Pakalne participated and gave the presentation about the LIFE Project. Over 60 people, involved in nature management, policy making and scientific research in different disciplines, from 12 European countries participated. Information on the long term effects of threats raised bogs,



Discussions about the management actions in Cena Mire during the LIFE Co-op seminar (Photo Ilze Salna)

as well as current ecological knowledge, perspectives, and solutions to nature management problems were discussed.

2. Second workshop of the LIFE coop Project "Dissemination of ecological knowledge and practical experiences for sound planning and management in raised bogs and sea dunes" in Latvia and Estonia August 22-26, 2005. During the seminar on August 22 presentation about Cena Mire and activities of the LIFE project was given by the project manager Mara Pakalne but on August 23 the excursion was guided to the site where over 70 participants from 13 countries participated, including The Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Great Britain, France,

Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Germany. In total 13 experts - zoologists, geologists, habitat experts and botanists participated in guiding the excursion in Cena Mire Nature Reserve. Field Guide was prepared for the excursion participants. It includes general information about Cena Mire and management actions. A poster was prepared for this workshop by Mara Pakalne and Aigars Indriksons under the title “Hydrological and vegetation studies in LIFE “Mire” sites in Latvia.

3. 14th Workshop European Vegetation Survey, Rome (Italy), from March 11-14, 2005.

Two staff members – Project manager Mara Pakalne and Project assistant Iluta Luce took part there. Mara Pakalne gave a presentation about the LIFE Project under the title „Monitoring and habitat management in the „Mire” LIFE Project sites in Latvia”. A poster about Cena Mire was also presented in the workshop.

4. W3M Conference for Wetlands: Monitoring, Modelling and Management”, September 22-25, 2005. in Wierzba, Poland Mara Pakalne and Iluta Luce participated in this Conference (<http://levis.sggw.waw.pl/wethydro/>). Presentation under the title „Habitat management in the „Mire” LIFE Project sites in Latvia” was given by the Project manager Mara Pakalne.

Variations/complications/delays: In the Project the study tour to Finland was planned in 2006 but it was organised in July 2005 as it was important for the project to get to know about building of dams and restoration of mire habitats already in the planning stage before the start of these actions.

Additional information: Programmes of Study tours are found in Annex 23 and posters in Annex 24.

ACTION E.11:

Name of action: Preparation of Layman’s report

Time plan: III – IV 2008

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

F. Overall project operation and monitoring

ACTION F.1:

Name of action: Project administration

Time plan: IV 2004 – IV 2008

Progress: The Project is realized in co-operation with 16 partners. To implement the Project activities the Project team was established that consists the project manager (Mara Pakalne), manager of the main activities (Juris Nusbaums), main habitat expert (Valda Baronina), project assistant (Iluta Luce), information co-coordinator (Marite Sokolovska) and financial assistant (Iveta Demberga). To raise awareness about the Project an expert in public relations has been hired (Ilze Salna).

Project manager coordinates the overall project performance, controls and monitors the whole project and team work, participates in the elaboration of management plans. Project assistant keeps the documentation of the project, organizes correspondence with project partners, stakeholders and Ministry of Environment, organizes meetings of the Steering group, organises study tours and seminars. Public awareness co-coordinator organizes publishing of booklets, seminars, meetings with stakeholders, and sends out information letters about seminars and meetings. Manager of main activities takes part the preparation of technical designs for building of dams on the drainage ditches, organizes technical and engineering aspects of building dams. Main habitat expert prepares the management plan for one of the sites and organizes the field work of the other management plan experts, collects data for the management plans on species and habitats that are needed for habitat maps of the project sites. Financial assistant keeps the accounts of the project and prepares the financial reports. There are 2 field monitors who collect and summarize the monitoring data on the site hydrology and the species and habitats in all the Project sites. The three

management plan experts work in cooperation with the main habitat expert and prepare the management plans for the other 3 project sites.

Project management meetings are organized by the project manager every week to discuss the results of the work and organize the further activities. Project staff members inform about the progress in their work. The further tasks are also discussed and problems solved. Project team and the invited experts participate in the meetings as well.



Project administration

For the successful management of the project, office equipment (2 personal and 2 portable computers, computer programmes, 2 printers, 6 GPS, digital camera, scanner, bureau furniture, two 4x4 wheel drive cars) were bought. The cars are used for the actions related to the site visits during the elaboration of management plans, habitat and hydrology monitoring, mire habitat management activities, as well as overall project management and organizing the work with the 16 project partners.

In March 1, 2005 the First Project Steering Group was organized and the meeting held.

The representative from the Ministry of

Environment Dace Ozola chaired the Steering Group meeting. The Steering group includes representatives from the project partners and other institutions and municipalities. The First Steering Group meeting was held in Olaine History and Art Museum that is the project partner. The following representatives attended the meeting (19 participants from 12 institutions): The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia, Nature Protection Board, The State Forest Service, Riga Regional Environmental Board, State Joint Stock Company „Latvia’s State Forests”, Marupe Municipality, Olaine Museum of History and Art, Aizkraukle District Council, Forest Research Station, Riga Forest Agency, Targale Municipality, Latvian Fund for Nature.

In First Steering Group meeting Project manager Mara Pakalne informed about project aim and actions which were in progress and planned as well. The main habitat expert Valda Baronina informed about the start of the elaboration of management plans of the projects sites. Project expert in hydrology Aigars Indriksons and manager of the main activities Juris Nusbaums informed about their current and planned activities. Participants of the Project Steering Group advised to have more cooperation with private owners and mass media that has been taken into account in the further work. At present a 16 papers have been written for the mass media and more contacts established with the landowners.

In October 12, 2005, the Second Steering Group meeting was held Olaine History and Art Museum. The meeting was attended by 29 participants from 20 institutions. During the meeting the project manager Mara Pakalne informed about the progress of the project and the main results of the 12 actions that are carried out during the first year of the project. Project habitat expert Valda Baronina told about the status of the elaboration of the management plans. Ilze Salna informed about public relations in the project. The manager of the main activities Juris Nusbaums told about the results of the elaboration of the technical designs for building dams, nature trails and towers. Project hydrologist Aigars Indriksons told about the results of hydrological studies. Project monitoring expert Liene Salmina informed about the results of the monitoring action in all the project sites.

Variations/complications/delays: Steering group meetings are held every 6 months. In between there have been 8 Management Plan Advisory Group meetings where the progress of the project activities has been discussed as well.

In the project it was planned to buy one 4X4 wheel drive car and another car. To carry out successfully both the habitat, hydrological and mire restoration activities it was decided to buy two 4X4 wheel drive cars that both are used for the field work and organising contacts with the 16 project partners.

Additional information: CV of the project manager in Annex 25. Programs of the 1st and 2nd Project Steering Group meetings are in Annex 26 – 27. Power Point presentations of the second Steering Group meetings are in Annex 28. TV shots are in Annex 29. Financial summary from September 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005 is in Annex 30.

ACTION F.2:

Name of action: Independent audit of the project

Time plan: IV 2005; I 2007; III – IV 2008

Progress: No

Variations/complications/delays: No

Additional information: No

Progress in vision for the next 6 months

In the next months all the management plans and individual regulations for the 4 project sites will be completed according to the project time schedule and handed to the Ministry of Environment of Latvia and the Nature Protection Board. To achieve this, the next Management plan Advisory group meetings are planned in during which the management plans must be approved by the stakeholders, local municipalities and nature protection organisations.

Work will be still continued and the technical designs for building of dams, nature trails and towers will be completed in 2005.

At present all the data about habitat and hydrological monitoring collected in year 2005 is summarised and will be completed until the end of the year.

Information for the next booklets about the project sites will be summarised.

Press releases and publications about the project will be prepared.

Home page will be continuously updated about the last actions of the project.

Film production about the project sites has been started and will be continued to follow the next project activities.