

Establishing long-term protection of *Crex crex* in Slovenia

SLO: Zagotavljanje dolgoročnega varstva kosca *Crex crex* v Sloveniji

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Second Interim activity report with payment request

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Section 1: Introduction

Background to the project

Corncrake is the only species of global conservation concern breeding in Slovenia in significant numbers. In last 15 years DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia counted between 400 and 590 calling males, an important number comparing to western and central European corncrake populations. Accordant with population trends in most of the region's countries corncrake is decreasing in numbers in Slovenia, as well.

There are several reasons for decrease of national corncrake population, but all key threats are connected with agriculture. Thriving corncrake populations depend on existence of large areas of extensive meadows in Slovenia almost exclusively sustained by low-input agricultural activities. Suitable corncrake habitat in Slovenia is disappearing fast. Reasons are both encroachment of high bushes due to abandonment of agriculture (overgrowing) and intensification of production that includes early mowing dates and conversion of meadows to arable land. Deeper reasons for this agricultural threats are absence of proactive conservation measures and corncrake unfriendly agricultural policy. Further problem is posed by overall low knowledge about species and its conservation requirements.

European Union has developed a number of tools for bird conservation through the Birds Directive, but most of them were not implemented in Slovenia so far. We found accession of Slovenia to EU as an opportunity to influence environmental and agricultural policies to transpose and to implement efficiently conservation tools that EU provides.

Overall objectives

The main project objective is preparation and creation of conservation tools for long term successful protection of *Crex crex* in Slovenia and speeding up the process of adoption of the European Union's Birds Directive in Slovenian legislation.

To influence major threats to *Crex crex* on ground level, the project aims to produce appropriate habitat management solutions and educate local farmers and land owners how to manage habitats in bird-friendly way and how to obtain additional funding for such management.

Additionally, the project objective is to raise awareness of general public, local stakeholders and decision-makers on local and national level.

Actions and means involved

DOPPS will prepare a National *Crex crex* Action Plan as the first step to assure the long-term protection of this species through providing the framework for appropriate conservation steps in the future.

Management guidelines for SPA qualification species for the 3 SPAs where project areas are located will be produced.

Field actions will be undertaken in 3 project areas: Ljubljansko Barje, Cerknica Lake and Nanoščica River Basin, all being *Crex crex* key sites. In total, a minimum of 180 hectares of land will be leased or purchased for *Crex crex* protection purposes.

In Cerknica Lake area the purchase and management of *Crex crex* breeding habitat is planned as the first phase of securing species' favorable conservation status in the whole area.

In the Ljubljansko Barje project area, a small reserve will be established and used as a promotional / educational tool on *Crex crex* and Natura 2000 issues.

Ljubljansko barje and Nanoščica project areas will be also used as demonstration sites to further educate farmers and local landowners about *Crex crex* friendly agricultural practices and as testing grounds for management solutions.

Educational / public awareness activities will include organizing workshops for farmers, local land owners and Slovene farming advisory service.

Machinery for maintaining the grasslands in all project areas will be purchased.

DOPPS will also promote and encourage policies, at the national and local levels, that benefit *Crex crex* by lobbying the responsible ministry or municipal officials.

Monitoring of the species will be implemented on annual basis. The results of monitoring will be used to revise and amend the National Action Plan, if needed. All actions undertaken during this project will be supported with activities focused on promotion and awareness rising of general public.

Expected results

The project will result in changes of agriculture policy through encouraging the subsidizing of bird-friendly management in future SPAs.

The designation of 3 project areas as SPAs during the project combined with production and implementation of management guidelines will give basis for the prevention of *Crex crex* harmful land use in these areas.

Management guidelines will serve as pilot schemes for the preparation of management plans in all other SPAs in Slovenia.

Increased up-take of agri-environmental measures by 15% will be achieved upon educational and promotional project activities.

Awareness on *Crex crex* issues among directly involved local stakeholders, decision makers as well as general public will be significantly increased.

In Cerknica Lake project area overall *Crex crex* friendly management will be established and continued by the local government after project end.

In all 3 project areas together, a minimum of 180 hectares of *Crex crex* breeding habitat will be managed according to management plans.

Established monitoring will result in overall insight to the conservation status of the species throughout the country.

Project will build the capacity to provide suitable solutions for threats to *Crex crex* occurring in other areas.

Section 2: Summary

Summary of activities during the report period

A. Preparatory actions

A1) We carried out several consultations about first draft of Corncrake species action plan and gathered additional valuable data. We decided to prepare second draft this autumn.

A2) We concluded field surveys of corncrake habitat requirements – survey of vegetation structure and floristic survey. We designed mowing and grazing experiments.

A3) Four potential locations for creating water body were investigated and one location chosen. We carried out several meetings and consultations in order to clarify permits giving procedures and technical feasibility of creating of the water surface. Geotechnical investigations of selected location were carried out and measuring of ground water level started.

B. Land lease and purchase

B2) 11 parcels of total surface 6,02 hectares were purchased in Ljubljansko barje project area. Purchasing procedure for additional 1,19 ha of land is in progress. For purchasing remaining 2,8 ha we started talks with 6 potential sellers.

B3) On Cerknjiško jezero 33,93 hectares of land were purchased from 8 land owners. Purchasing activities for further 75 hectares started and are now in various stages of progress.

C. Non recurring management

There were no bush removal or mowing in report period in any project area. Plan for both was prepared while fieldwork started in August, just after report period. Management agreement was signed with Mr. Otoničar for mowing parcels he leased in Nanošča project area.

D. Recurring management

Under action D1 Purchase and maintain machinery for habitat maintenance we purchased tractor, square baler, mower and tedder and few pieces of hand tools.

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results

E1) Large number of meeting and contacts were performed to encourage and promote policies at national and local level that benefit *Crex crex* and aim to encourage legal protection of key Corncrake sites. Communication was especially extensive with Ministry for agriculture and Ministry for Environment and with various agencies of both Ministries. Organising of large conference is in progress. We prepared analysis of impact of non-designation of parts of proposed SPAs to bird conservation objectives.

E2, E4, E5) Under this actions, which aim to inform and educate farmers, local people, local politicians and general public about Corncrake and its protection, we performed large number of activities. There were at least 45 lectures presented, at least 5 excursions carried out, at least 12 articles published, 4 meetings with farmers advisors performed and tens of regular individual meetings with farmers and other stakeholders held. Colouring booklet for school children was reprinted (1000 copies).

E8) We gathered all needed permits for raising notice boards. We organise production of boards and erected 6 of them in all three project areas.

F. Overall project operation

F1) We carried out all necessary planning and organising activities to carry out project successfully. Meetings and personal communication of project team was regular. Project was discussed at two meetings of DOPP's Executive Board. We concluded purchasing equipment with purchasing car.

F2) Corncrake monitoring was carried out at 7 corncrake SPAs. 82 volunteer fieldworkers took part in monitoring counting together 314 corncrake calling males.

Table of identifiable products and milestones

<i>Identifiable products / milestones</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Date of completion</i>
National <i>Crex crex</i> Action plan – draft version	A1	31.10.2004	31.10.2004
National <i>Crex crex</i> Action plan – reviewed and updated version	A1	31.12.2006	
Biodiversity Action Plan with <i>Crex crex</i> Action plan included adopted by the state authorities	A1	after the end of the project	
Study on suitable habitats for <i>Crex crex</i>	A2	31.12.2005	in progress
Management guidelines for SPA qualification species in 3 project areas	A2	31.12.2006	in progress
Spatial plan for Ljubljansko Barje reserve	A3	30.9.2005	in progress
Technical documentation and evaluation of incidence for Ljubljansko Barje reserve prepared	A3	30.4.2006	in progress
Management plan for Ljubljansko Barje reserve	A4	31.12.2006	
Land in Ljubljansko Barje project area leased	B1	31.12.2004	
Land in Ljubljansko Barje project area purchased	B2	30.6.2006	in progress
Land in Cerknica Lake project area purchased	B3	31.12.2006	in progress
Land in Nanoščica project area leased	B4	cancelled	cancelled
Habitat creation field work in Ljubljansko Barje project area finished	C1	31.12.2006	
Land in Ljubljansko Barje, Cerknica Lake and Nanoščica project area mowed, afforestation eliminated	C2	31.12.2006	in progress
Visitor infrastructure in Ljubljansko Barje reserve set-up	C3	31.3.2006	
Designation of 3 project areas (currently IBAs) as Natura 2000 sites	E1	30.4.2004	30.4.2004
Contacts with farming advisors, local authorities and owners of major land parcels established in all project areas	E2	31.12.2004	31.12.2004
10 articles published in agricultural magazines	E2	31.12.2006	in progress
Brochure on <i>Crex crex</i> and proper grassland management	E3	31.12.2006	
Leaflet presenting LIFE Natura III, this project, <i>Crex crex</i> and project areas and project goals	E4	30.6.2004	30.6.2004
6 articles published in national magazines	E4	31.12.2006	31.12.2004
3 articles published in DOPPS magazine	E4	31.12.2006	30.6.2005
Coloring booklet for children presenting <i>Crex crex</i>	E5	31.10.2004	31.10.2004
At least 10 articles published in local media	E5	31.12.2006	31.7.2005
Leaflet published for reserve promotion	E6	31.12.2005	
WEB site	E7	31.10.2004	31.10.2004
<i>Crex crex</i> monitoring report for 2004	F2	31.12.2004	26.10.2004
<i>Crex crex</i> monitoring report for 2005	F2	31.12.2005	in progress
Final <i>Crex crex</i> monitoring report	F2	31.12.2006	
Progress report (1.1.2004 – 31.12.2004)		28.2.2005	28.2.2005
Interim report (1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005)		28.2.2006	22.9.2005
Final report (1.1.2004 – 31.12.2006)		31.3.2007	

Problems and difficulties

During the course of project we are facing a number of problems and difficulties. Most of them we are able to handle and are source of valuable experience. Some of them are large scale problems. At the moment it is not clear whether it will be possible to overcome them before the foreseen end of the project.

Major problems are with feasibility of creating water body in frame of nature reserve that is foreseen in Ljubljansko barje project area under actions A3-C1-C3. There are several problems which are described in detail under action A3. To name just most important of them: complications in selecting the site for the water surface, complicated and unclear permit giving procedures, several unexpected technical problems, land ownership problems. We believe we'll clarify all circumstances this autumn. After that we'll inform Commission whether we'll be able to carry out this actions before foreseen end of the project or we'll have to ask for extension.

Another problem is connected with land purchasing at Ljubljansko barje project area (B2), which is extremely complicated and time consuming. Problem is causing large delays in land purchase, but will be completed before foreseen end of the project.

There are other lesser scale problems and difficulties which are presented and discussed under several other actions, but due to the minor scale here do not need special attention.

Section 3: Detailed report of activities

A1 – Production of national *Crex crex* Species action plan

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
A1 Production of national <i>Crex crex</i> action plan					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

In whole project period following activities are foreseen:

- preparing draft of the national Corncrake Species action plan
- at the end of the project reviewing draft and preparing final version of Action plan
- distribution of the action plan to all relevant stakeholders, e.g. to Ministries of the Environment and of Agriculture, to local municipalities, to farmer advisors etc.
- publicising summary of the action plan in the brochure on Corncrake and proper grassland management

Progress in report period

Production of the national Corncrake action plan

Project team at DOPPS - BirdLife Slovenia (Luka Božič, Andrej Medved, Polona Sladič) prepared the first draft of the action plan in previous reporting period. We submitted the draft version of the plan to the national Corncrake expert M.Sc. Slavko Polak for scientific supervision. In this report period we held numerous valuable consultations and discussions on Corncrake and its conservation with Mr. Polak. We collect additional valuable data from local farmers and Farmers advisory service.

In course of project we largely broaden our knowledge on corncrake and its conservation. Therefore we decided to prepare second draft, before distributing it widely for comments. On second draft we'll work in autumn this year.

Distribution of the action plan and Publication of the summary

No actions were foreseen in this report period. We will distribute the second draft of the action plan at the end of this year. Publication is planned at the end of the project in 2006.

Variations, complications and delays

There were no complications or delays. Minor variation is decision to prepare second draft of the action plan before distributing it widely, as it was mentioned in previous section.

A2 – Management guidelines for SPA qualification species in 3 SPAs

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
A2 Mgmt. guidelines for SPA qualification species in 3 SPAs					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

According project proposal following activities are foreseen in whole project period:

- preparation of management guidelines for 3 project areas SPAs
- conduct a study of Corncrake habitat requirements
- distribution of the management guidelines to the relevant national and local authorities
- publicising summary of the management guidelines in the brochure on Corncrake and proper grassland management.

Progress in report period

Preparation of management guidelines

We will prepare final management guidelines after analysis and evaluation of surveys and trials listed below. Start of work on development of management guidelines is foreseen for the beginning of 2006.

Study of Corncrake habitat requirements - Vegetation structure survey

In spring-summer season of 2005 we carried out the remaining part of the study of Corncrake habitat requirements set up in spring 2004 on Ljubljansko barje. We found repetition of the survey extremely useful due to much different field conditions in subsequent survey years. Prolonged survey period will allow interesting and useful comparison of results.

Furthermore, we expand the study area to another important Corncrake area, Planinsko polje. This site is large floodplain, characterized by somewhat different type of meadows. The vegetation surveys and Corncrake counts were performed using the same method as on Ljubljansko barje. Meadows on both study sites are representative of Corncrake habitats on wider range of sites in Slovenia.

We finished the fieldwork related to the study in July 2005. The most of the above mentioned part of the study was carried out by conservation ornithologist Luka Božič, with smaller cooperation of further two experts (Tomaž Mihelič, Andrej Medved).

Study of Corncrake habitat requirements - Floristic survey

Additionally, in summer 2005 we subcontracted a team of expert botanists from Institute of Biology (Slovenian academy of sciences and art) to conduct floristic vegetation survey on study areas. The aim of this part of the study is to determine plant species characteristic for meadows with breeding Corncrakes and for meadows without Corncrakes.

Final analysis of the results of both Corncrake habitat requirements studies is foreseen for the end of this year.

Mowing and grazing experiments

In summer 2005 we carried out designing of two special experiments, which started just after the report period. The aim of the mowing experiment is to evaluate three different mowing techniques (one commonly used outside-in way of mowing and two different inside-out ways of mowing) according to time consumption, labour, suitability to parcel structure and susceptibility to conservation aims. The experiment took place on parcels owned by DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia on Ljubljansko barje in late August and September this year. Different mowing techniques were performed with our own mowing machinery.

The aim of the grazing experiment is to measure and evaluate long-term impact of different livestock loads on Corncrake habitat (vegetation structure, floristic composition etc.). Selected experiment plots on Ljubljansko barje project area will be exposed to autumn cattle grazing with different livestock loads (measured as livestock units per hectare). The experiment will start in October 2005. Furthermore, cattle grazing will take place in autumn period (app. September-November) in following consecutive years. Each year impact of the grazing will be measured and analysed.

Variations, complications and delays

No significant complications occurred under this action, except rather unfavourable ground conditions on Ljubljansko barje in 2004, resulting in unexpectedly low numbers of Corncrakes.

However, under this action we added two special experiments, we mentioned above - mowing and grazing experiments. We believe with carefully planned experiments we can obtain valuable data needed for preparation of reliable and effective management guidelines. Proper management guidelines for Corncrake as well as other grassland bird species of significant conservation importance must take into consideration use of relevant "bird friendly" mowing techniques to minimize as much as possible destruction of nests and young birds during mowing. Descriptions of proper mowing techniques and advices related to mowing will constitute important part of management guidelines for all 3 project areas. Therefore, testing and evaluation of different mowing techniques is necessary prior to preparation of management guidelines.

On most of the major Corncrake sites in Slovenia an increasing grazing pressure occurs. Intensive grazing of wet meadows has detrimental impact on Corncrakes and habitat of many important grassland species due to destruction of vegetation cover and trampling. However, limited and controlled late season grazing with lower livestock loads could be possible also within areas with important grassland habitat. Moreover, such kind of grazing could have positive effects on some bird species. We can evaluate all possible consequences of grazing of wet meadows only with specially arranged experiment.

Costs of additional experiments will not be significant and will be covered within foreseen budget of the project.

A3 – Technical documentation, permits and management plan for Ljubljansko barje project area

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
A3 Lj. Barje Reserve documentation		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

In frame of Ljubljansko barje project area creation of small nature reserve with visitor infrastructure is foreseen. Creation of reserve should include creation of water surface and habitats for various flora and fauna species. To accomplish this, the following activities are foreseen under this action in project period:

- flora and fauna expert evaluations with proposals for habitat restoration will be prepared
- workshop with flora and fauna experts will be organised to harmonize their views and to determine the measures to ensure appropriate habitats for the various flora and fauna species
- a simple "spatial plan" of habitats and organization of the visitor infrastructure will be prepared
- technical specifications will be prepared
- evaluation of incidence will be prepared to evaluate the impact of the new habitats and visitor infrastructure on the Natura 2000 site

- all necessary permits will be obtained
- management plan for the reserve will be prepared

Progress in report period; variations, complications and delays

Water surface was planned as central attraction of the small reserve, which would increase diversity of habitats and of the biodiversity. Purpose of the reserve is to serve as educational point for local people and school children.

Because several complications arose, the progress, variations, complication and delays are presented in same chapter. We reported on some of them in our first Progress report for 2004 and in our Additional information from 8th of June 2005.

In Appendix 1.4 we show four locations considered potentially suitable for locating water surface. In project preparation phase, we chose location A, more precisely eastern part of it. In first progress report we reported we are considering the restoration of former riverbed of river Iška on another location (C).

When we investigated location C, two obstacles came up. First is unacceptable cost of technical work for restoration due extremely soft terrain – temporary dike should be built to enable dredging machinery and lorries to access the foreseen water body location. M.Sc. Ana Petkovšek (Faculty for Civil and Geodetic Engineering) made an estimation that constructing and later removing temporary dike would cost more than all other technical work for reserve. Second obstacle is high present value of biodiversity in wet depression of former riverbed.

As consequence we identified additional two possible locations, B and D. According to the present knowledge, we believe that location B is only remaining possible location for water body in all Ljubljansko barje project area.

Table 2: Key pros and cons for four alternative locations for creating water surface

	A	B	C	D
Ground water level (technical feasibility)	-- low, large excavation needed	+ low, can be raised by dam	++ high	++ high
Accessibility for machinery	++ solid terrain	++ solid terrain	-- soft terrain	-- soft terrain
Impact to present biodiversity value	++ low present biodiversity value	++ low present biodiversity value	-- very high present biodiversity value	- high present biodiversity value
Control of land (lease or purchase)	++ all parcels leased	+ 3 parcels yet to be acquired, it looks possible	++ all parcels leased or purchased	-- one parcel not available for purchasing in project period

Below we summarize activities carried out in this report period:

- on suitability of alternative locations for water surface we consulted two flora & fauna experts (dr. Kaligarič University of Maribor and Mrs. Katja Poboljšaj from Centre for cartography of flora & fauna) and team of French protected area Réserve Naturelle de Lavours on occasion of their visit of Ljubljansko barje;
- we carried out two workshops of project team on suitability of four alternative locations for water surface;
- we consulted several officials to clarify what documentation and permits we have to obtain; we had at least one meeting with each of them and usually several phone consultations: Mrs. Kolar

Planinšič from Ministry for environment, Mrs. Juran and Mrs. Jogan from Institute RS for nature conservation, Mrs. Jeglič from department for nature and Mr. Rozman from department for waters at Agency RS for environment, Mrs. Skok from urbanist department of Municipality of Ig and with Mr. Sovinc from Landscape park Sečoveljske soline;

- to explore technical feasibility of creating water surface on four alternative locations we worked with three civil engineering experts: with M.Sc. Ana Petkovšek, lecturer at Faculty for Civil and Geodetic Engineering of University of Ljubljana, with Mr. Fazarinc from Water institute of RS and with hydro engineer Mr. Sovinc from Landscape park Sečoveljske soline; consultations include 4 meetings, 3 site visits and number of phone consultations;
- in July Mrs. Petkovšek performed geotechnical investigation of two probes at location B;
- we consulted Mr. Lenarčič (land owner of one parcel at location B) on possibility of including his parcel in reserve; he says he will probably not sell the parcel, but he is willing to exchange it for another;

At the moment it seems realistic to clarify all open questions before the end of this year. In the report for the rest of 2005 we should be able to report whether all permits could be obtained in spring 2006 (as we assumed in our Additional information we sent to Commission on 8th of June 2005) and whether it will be realistic to conclude creation of water surface and the rest of the reserve.

B1 – Lease of land in Ljubljansko barje area

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
B1 Lease in Lj. Barje area					■	■	■	■								

Actions foreseen in report period

No actions were foreseen in report period.

Progress in report period

Action was accomplished in 2004. The only activity within this action was receiving and paying invoice for land rental for previous year 2004.

B2 – Purchase of land in Ljubljansko Barje area

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
B2 Purchase in LJ. Barje area					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

- DOPPS will purchase 10 ha of land in Ljubljansko barje project area
- All purchased land will be recorded in land register as nature conservation property

Progress in report period

Before the end of reporting period we have purchased 11 parcels from three land owners. Total surface of this parcels is 6,02 hectares.

In March 2005 we agreed purchase with Mr. Smole for further 3 parcels with sum surface of 1,19 hectares, but purchasing procedures were temporary stopped due to complications. Only when some part of purchasing procedures were already completed it came out, that (1) parcels in question are formally still owned by Mr. Smole's late father and that (2) Mr. Smoles farm is protected – for explanation see under "Variations, complications and delays". We expect we'll be able to overcome complications and purchase this parcels from Mr. Smole.

To purchase lacking land to reach targeted 10 hectares we started talks with number of land owners, namely with Mr. Lenarčič, Mr. Svigelj, Mrs. Maček, Mrs. Požar, Mr. and Mrs. Japelj, Mrs. Remškar and Roman Catholic Parish Tomišelj.

We believe we'll be able to purchase all land planed before the end of the project.

Table 3: Summary data on land purchased in Ljubljansko barje project area.

<i>Name of land owner</i>	<i>Date of contract</i>	<i>Surface [ha]</i>	<i>Land register parcel N°s</i>	<i>Progress status</i>
Danica Kumše	11.5.2005	1,17	989, 1272	purchasing procedures completed
Srečko Feliks Modic	6.7.2005	1,91	1052, 1263, 1264	purchasing procedures completed
Pavla Cirila Kumše	22.7.2005	2,94	996, 997, 1000, 1034, 1269, 1270	purchasing procedures completed
Franc Smole	/	1,19	1044, 1260, 1261	purchasing procedures stopped due complications

Variations, complications and delays

(1) Complications and delays in land purchasing

In the project proposal, we planed to conclude all land purchasing in the first 6 months of the project duration. Now we know that this action will take at least two years more. There are several reasons for that, which are described below.

(1.1) Complicated land transaction procedures

We knew before, that Slovenian legislation is not in favour to selling agricultural to non farmers. But only when we started to work on land purchase we realised how complicated and time consuming are the procedures. In best case it takes a quarter of year from the reaching agreement about purchase between the parties and the completion of all procedures. In simplest case purchase procedures include following 18 steps:

1. Obtaining Parcel map from Geodetic Agency of Republic of Slovenia ("Geodetska uprava RS") – Parcel map is issued immediately at counter
2. Prepare and apply Application for issuing Planning information ("Lokacijska informacija"¹) from local municipality; Parcel map have to be enclosed
3. Issuing Planning information – this phase takes min 2 weeks
4. Prepare (seller) "Offer for selling agricultural land" and put it in to Administrative unit ("Upravna enota"²); Planning information have to be enclosed

¹ »Lokacijska informacija« is Planning information, it is document which summarise all regulations which apply to parcel in question; it is issued by local municipalities on request; it is obligatory first step in Land transaction procedures and in procedures of obtaining various permits for constructing.

5. Administrative unit expose Offer to public for 30 day
6. In time of exposition of Offer purchaser prepare “Statement of acceptance of offer” and put it in to Administrative unit
7. When exposition of Offer is closed Administrative unit issues Notification on received Statements of acceptance; in this phase Administrative unit sets up priority list of purchasers according to right of preemption rules defined in national Act on agricultural land; this phase usually takes 1 week
8. Then Notary can draw up the Purchase agreement with first purchaser from the list in Notification from Administrative unit – this phase takes few days
9. Purchase agreement is then signed by seller and purchaser (DOPPS president)
10. Prepare and put in Application for issuing Agricultural land transaction permission to Administrative unit; signed Purchase agreement have to be enclosed
11. Issuing Transaction permission by Administrative unit – this phase takes 1 to 2 weeks
12. Prepare and put in Application for Transaction tax assessment to Tax administration of Republic of Slovenia – Tax assessment is issued immediately at counter
13. Couple of days after Tax is paid Receipt can be obtained at counter at Tax administration
14. Prepare and put in Application for issuing Confirmation that Transaction permission finality; Transaction permission becomes final in 15 days after issuing if nobody lodges a complaint
15. Issuing Confirmation that Transaction permission is final by Administrative unit – this phase takes 2-3 weeks
16. Verification of sellers signature on Purchase agreement at Notary; in this stage Purchase agreement is legally concluded
17. Than purchaser pays to seller
18. Prepare and put in to the Court Request for registering land transaction in Land register

(1.2) Protected farms

Act on agricultural land and Act on inheritance of farms define legal term “protected farm” and brings several limitations to inheriting and to selling parts of such farm. The parcel, which is part of “protected farm” can be freely sold to another “protected farm”. On the other hand, it is possible to sell such parcel to any other subject only in some cases and with additional procedures. At the time of writing a project proposal we were not aware, that large proportion of farms in Ljubljansko barje area are actually “protected farms”. Even many farmers who own “protected farm” are not aware of the fact.

Because of this many parcels of land are not accessible to us for purchasing.

(1.3) Decreasing offer of agricultural parcels due to increasing agricultural subsidies

In last years Slovenia gradually increases agricultural subsidies, especially just before and after accessing to European Union. This resulted in decreasing of willingness to sell land among farmers and in increasing of land prices.

(1.4) Pre-emption rules

Act on agricultural land defines pre-emption rules and list of precedence of purchasers. Purchaser which is higher on the list has precedence to buy the land if there are more candidates. High on the list of precedence are leaseholders and organisations registered for agricultural activity.

To gain some degree of precedence at the beginning of the project in 2004 DOPPS obtained registration for agricultural activity at Ministry for agriculture, forestry and food.

(2) Complications in recording nature conservation property to Land register

In Project application we stated, that all purchased land will be recorded in land register as nature conservation property. After thorough investigation we realised, that according Slovene legislation

² »Upravna enota« is Administrative unit in Slovenia, it is regional representation of national Government; Slovenia is divided to ca. 50 Administrative units.

such recording is not possible. To investigate these questions we had several meetings with lawyer Mr. Petrovič, with Mr. Kos from Notary office Erjavec and with Mrs. Kremesec, jurist from Ministry for environment. At the moment we do not know what alternative solution should be applied to reach same objective. Mrs. Kremesec advised us to explore possibilities of Act on foundations. We will continue to work on this question after completing this Interim report.

B3 – Purchase of land in Cerkniško jezero area

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
B4 – Lease of land in Nanoščica project area					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

The project partner, the Municipality of Cerknica, will purchase a minimum of 100 hectares of land in Cerkniško jezero area. It is foreseen to record parcels in land register as nature conservation property.

Progress in report period

For implementation of this action, project partner municipality of Cerknica is responsible. Within municipality, the team of Notranjski Regional Park (NRP) is working on the project. Project team is composed of park director Valentin Schein and park conservation manager Leon Kebe.

In the year 2005 NRP received 19 offers for land purchase. In the report period, 6 purchasing procedures were concluded. In total 33,63 hectares of land were purchased. Together with purchases in 2004, 62,41 hectares of land were purchased in Cerkniško jezero area.

Additional 27 bids or 75,52 hectares are in several different stages of land purchase process.

Table 4: Summary data on land purchased in Cerkniško jezero project area

Name	Date of contract	Surface [ha]	Land register parcel N°s
Ana Telič	21.1.2005	5,85	192, 515/1, 529, 1013, 1035
Janez Šega	28.1.2005	3,01	561/2, 646, 810, 833/2, 695, 699, 596, 616, 981, 1280, 674
Janez Šilc	9.3.2005	5,25	1668/1, 1725, 1810, 2179, 2474, 2559, 2596, 2620, 2676, 2764, 2767/1, 2767/2, 2775, 2783, 2785, 2227, 2460, 2477
Janko & Danica Mišič	10.3.2005	4,07	549/1
Davorin & Andreja Porok	16.3.2005	3,46	225, 1209
Niko Krajc	22.3.2005	11,99	2497, 2395, 2498/3, 2192, 2023, 2071, 2218, 2262, 2403, 2442/2, 2484, 2522/1, 2130, 2220, 2310/2, 2339, 2412, 2466, 2550, 2387, 2459, 1258, 1743, 1815, 2070, 2283, 2358, 2396, 2521

Variations, complications and delays

Our project partner managed to agree very attractive prices for land purchases. Therefore we expect we'll be able to purchase more land than the minimum foreseen.

Under the action B2, we have described extremely complicated and time consuming procedures of agricultural land purchasing. Fortunately this is not the case under this action. Nature conservation

act defines special procedure for purchasing land in protected areas if the purpose of the purchase is conservation and if purchaser is either state or municipality. This procedure is simple and straightforward. Additional benefit is, that in this procedure there is no land transfer tax.

As described under action B2, there is no legal basis for recording parcels in land register as nature conservation property in Slovenia. We discussed this problem with our project partner. We identified one possible solution: to transfer all purchased land to Notranjski Regional Park.

At this stage we kindly ask Commission to approve whether transferring land to Regional park would be appropriate alternative to currently impossible registering of land as nature conservation property in land register in Slovenia.

B4 – Lease of land in Nanošćica area

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
B4 – Lease of land in Nanošćica project area					■	■	■									

Actions foreseen in report period

This action is cancelled.

In original project it was foreseen that DOPPS will lease a minimum of 25 hectares of wet meadows in vicinity of Nanošćica river from the Fund of agricultural land of Republic Slovenia.

Progress in report period

There were no activities under this action in the report period.

Variations, complications and delays

Variations and complications of this action were presented extensively in our Progress report for 2004 and in two letters with additional information sent to Commission on June 8th and on September 12th 2005.

C1 – Create and maintain habitats for *Crex crex* and other species in Ljubljansko barje reserve

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
C1 Create and maintain habitats in Ljubljansko barje reserve						■	■	■								

Actions foreseen in project period

Under this action following activities in Ljubljansko barje project area are foreseen:

- to remove majority of bushes
- to manage grassland according to the management guidelines
- create the reserve according to technical documentation prepared under action A3

Progress in report period

There were no bush removal and meadow mowing foreseen for the report period. Both will be carried out in late summer and in autumn – it is in progress in time of preparing this report and will be reported in the progress report for the rest of the 2005. In the Appendix 1.3 we present the map showing area mowed and shredded in 2004. The map was not provided with Progress report for the 2004.

In the report period we didn't work on creating the reserve.

Variations, complications and delays

Originally, in our project proposal, we planned that reserve will be created before the end of 2004. This proved to be unrealistic due to delays of action A3. Most of the action A3 have to be completed before action C1 starts. For further information on reasons for delay see explanation under A3.

C2 – Maintain habitats for *Crex crex* and other grassland species in Nanoštica and Cerknjško jezero project areas

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
C3 Visitors infrastructure in LJ. reserve							■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

Under this action following activities area are foreseen to be carried out in late summer and autumn each year:

- to mow 1-2 times meadows in Nanoštica project area,
- to maintain appropriate habitat for *Crex crex* on the land purchased by project partner Municipality of Cerknica (Notranjski regijski park)

Progress in report period

In May we signed "Management agreement for 2005" with Mr. Albin Otoničar. He is local farmer who leased all parcels, we planned to lease in Nanoštica project area under action B4. In Agreement we agreed that (a) Mr. Otoničar will mow parcels in question according to our guidelines, which are included in agreement as Annex and (b) DOPPS will pay him compensation (about 500 EUR).

There was no mowing carried out under this action in the report period. Mowing is foreseen to be carried out in autumn.

Meadows in Nanoštica project area were mowed in 2004. In Appendix 3.2 we present the map, which was not provided with Progress report for the 2004.

Variations, complications and delays

It was foreseen to lease 25 ha meadows in Nanoštica project area that would be mowed by project team. Due to complications, regarding the land lease – land was leased out to local farmer Mr. Otoničar just before project started – this is no longer possible.

Instead we established good cooperation with Mr. Otoničar and managed to reach agreement about how to manage meadows in Corncrake friendly manner. He agreed he'll mow meadows

according to management guidelines that we prepare and which are attached to Management agreement signed between DOPPS and Mr. Otoničar.

For further information on complications with land lease and on establishing cooperation with Mr. Otoničar see our Progress report for 2004 and two letters with additional information sent to Commission on June 8th and on September 12th 2005.

C3 – Set up visitors infrastructure in Ljubljansko barje reserve

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
Number/name	I	II	III	IV												
C3 Visitors infrastructure in LJ. reserve																

Actions foreseen in report period

This is one of the actions needed to create small reserve within project area of Ljubljansko barje, beside of actions “A3 – technical documentation and permits” and part of “C1 – Create and maintain habitats. This action includes construction of following infrastructure elements:

- observation tower for birdwatching
- interpretation tables for presentation of typical Barje habitats, fauna and flora
- footpaths to connect public roads with observatory and certain parts of reserve we will use for educational goals

Progress in report period

In this report period we didn't work on this action.

Variations, complications and delays

Originally, in our project proposal, we planed that this action will be finished in first quarter of year 2005. This proved to be unrealistic due to delays of action A3. Most of action A3 have to be completed before action C3 starts. For further information on reasons for delay se explanation under A3.

D1 – Purchase and maintain machinery for habitat maintenance

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
Number/name	I	II	III	IV												
D1 Purchase machinery								■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

In project proposal it was foreseen to purchase a set of agricultural machinery which will serve us for habitat management and maintenance. We planed to purchase tractor and tractor attachments (mower, loader, tedder, etc...).

Progress in report period

We started with purchasing procedures for machinery in November 2004 (invite tenders). So far we purchased tractor (supplied in April), mower, tedder and square baler (all supplied in July).

For purchasing flail shredder we will invite tenders and will purchase it in autumn this year.

We also purchase a set of hand tools: shovel, hoe, rake, chopper and personal protective equipment (ear and eye protection) for fieldworker.

Variations, complications and delays

In project preparation phase we intended to purchase loader. Supported with experience which we gained through course of project we decided that we'll purchase square baler instead of loader. It is easier to store and to distribute hay in bales than unbaled hay.

All three attachments which we already purchase (mower, tedder and square baler) are essential for grassland management. During course of project we realise we would need also flail shredder. This tractor attachment is essential for moving meadows in early stages of overgrowing and for removing first year offshoots, which grows from roots next few years after removal of large bushes. Funds foreseen in project proposal are not sufficient to purchase all four tractor attachments. For this reason we decided to buy second-hand square baler and flail shredder.

E1 – Encourage and promote policies at national and local level that benefit *Crex crex*, including encouraging maximum legal protection of key sites

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E1 Encourage and promote policies...					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

In project preparation phase we identified encouraging and promoting policies, both in national and local levels, as one of important actions of the project. We identified following means to work on this action:

- establish contacts with applicable officials in Ministry of agriculture, in Ministry for environment and in local municipalities
- lobbying and educating them through number of contacts and meetings;
- encourage cooperation between both Ministries to work together for policies in question;
- supplying all relevant officials with results of the project.

Progress in report period

Contacting and meetings with Ministry of Agriculture to encourage and promote adoption of more bird-friendly agricultural policies

The lobbying process at the Ministry of Agriculture and associated organisations in Agriculture and Rural Development could be specified as follows:

- meetings of the Slovene Monitoring Committee for National Rural Development Plan 2004 – 2006 within the Ministry of Agriculture
- meetings of Slovene Social Partners and other NGOs in Agriculture and Rural Development at the Ministry of agriculture

- meetings of the Slovene Project Group for Strategic documents preparation in the area of Rural Development for the period 2007 – 2013 within the Ministry of Agriculture
- meetings with the Slovene Chamber for Agriculture and Forestry
- Other activities

Table 5: Summary of activities on lobbying at Ministry for agriculture:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>No.of meetings / other</i>
Meetings of the Slovene MC for RDP 2004 – 2006	Monitoring of the implementation of measures under the national RDP 2004 – 2006	2 meetings at the Ministry
Meeting of Slovene Social Partners and other NGOs	Comments on Slovene position on new EC Rural Development Regulation 2007 – 2013	3 meetings at the Ministry
Meetings of the Slovene PG for Strategic documents in RD 2007 – 2013	Starting of the drafting process for the new national Rural Development plan for 2007 – 2013	2 day workshop
Meetings with the Slovene Chamber for Agriculture and Forestry	Lectures about wet grasslands habitat management within the Chambers' national lectures programme Future project development and cooperation on Natura 2000 sites (wet grasslands)	3 meetings with the Chamber
Other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special letter about Natura 2000 and Rural Development sent to the Minister • definition and description of hedge / hedgerow within the adoption of the Cross compliance regulation in Slovenia • meeting with Slovene Agriculture in Rural Development NGOs organised by the Slovene Society for Rural Development • proposal on integration of wet grasslands management guidelines into the national Organic Farming Action plan (Slovene Organic Farming Association) 	more than 10 meetings / contacts

Meetings of the Slovene Monitoring Committee (MC) for RDP 2004 – 2006. The agronomy specialist of the project team has become a member of the national Monitoring Committee for Rural Development Plan 2004 – 2006 within the Ministry of Agriculture. This has been achieved as a result of persistent lobbying at the Ministry especially through participation at different events, presentations and seminars. The membership in the MC gives the opportunity to receive updated information about rural development schemes implementation and other important information that could be used for future work on new agri – environmental tools modelling. The MC gives great opportunities also to meet with other agriculture and rural development organisation representatives in Slovenia.

There were two meetings of the Committee in the report period, which were supported by series of preparatory contacts.

Meeting of Slovene Social Partners (SP) and other NGOs. This Group has been established in the middle of year 2004 within the Ministry of Agriculture. The agronomy specialist of the project team takes part in briefings especially related to the drafting procedure of new EC Regulation on supports for rural development and other related strategic documents. The membership in this group has offered great opportunities for spreading and informing other SP members about the importance of Natura 2000 designation and special measures related so endangered grassland birds. This group is composed of Slovene NGOs representatives related to agriculture and rural development. There were three Group in the report period.

Meetings of the Slovene Project Group (PG) for Strategic documents in RD 2007 – 2013. Following the adoption of the new EC Regulation on Supports for Rural Development and the Strategic Guidelines a Project Group for new Rural Development Plan 2007 – 2013 for Republic of Slovenia has been formed within the Ministry of agriculture. The PG is the main Slovene body for drafting new RDP 2007 – 2013 and is composed by state bodies representatives, university representatives, NGOs and other interested parties. The project team has become a member of that group as a result of the active membership in other Ministry bodies. This role offers good opportunities to lobby for future birds friendly management guidelines integration into the new RDP 2007 – 2013 and the coming Natura 2000 payments that could significantly contribute to the long term *Crex crex* protection in Slovenia. Project group carried out two days workshop in July.

Meetings with the Slovene Chamber for Agriculture and Forestry. The Slovene Chamber for Agriculture and Forestry is the main organisation in Slovenia for Farmer Advisory Services providing. It is composed of eight regional offices with more than 400 field advisors covering the whole Slovenia territory. The Chamber has been representing Slovene farmers in front of the Slovene government for a long time what gives it special position in Agriculture Sector.

Project team has started negotiations with the Chamber at the beginning of the project in January 2004 but the first results have come out during the report period. Based on several discussions about future cooperation with the Chamber we have achieved an agreement about taking part in the national lecture programme within the Slovene Agri – Environmental Programme. The Project Team has prepared a special presentation about *Crex crex* friendly habitat management that was placed on the list behind other presentations of Chambers' field advisors and circulated among all 8 Regional Offices. Following that, the information about *Crex crex* has been spread along the whole country. The lectures specifications are listed under Action E2 - Lectures for farmers and farmer advisors.

Other activities. Some other activities have been taken in the report period that could facilitate the main lobbying activities at the Ministry of agriculture.

Special Letter about Natura 2000 and Rural Development. In February 2005 a special letter was sent to the Agriculture Minister explaining the importance of the new EC Regulation on Supports to Rural Development. The letter was prepared in a time, when the new Regulation was under revision.

Integration of wet grasslands management guidelines into the national Organic Farming Action plan. The project team was invited to assist and present the bird friendly habitat management guidelines at the regular Meeting of the Slovene Organic Farming Association (OFA) in Ljubljana (dated on 12.01.2005). The presented guidelines have been positively accepted by the OFA representatives and gives good basis for further discussions about integration into the National Organic Farming Action Plan.

Organisation of a Conference on Natura 2000 in Slovenia and wet grassland management guidelines promotion

We identified organising large scale conference as major opportunity to influence lobbying under this action. Due to the scale and the importance of it we present Conference here in separate subchapter.

Project team has started with the preparation of a National Conference on Natura 2000 and Rural Development – Outlook for Agriculture, Forestry and Biodiversity that will take place in Grand Hotel Union, Ljubljana on September 27th 2005. The Conference aims at establishing inter – ministerial communication in the time, when new strategic and programming documents are being drafted on a national level.

As one of the preparatory activities project team has elaborated special recommendations for integrating bird friendly habitat management guidelines in the National Rural Development Plan 2007 – 2013.

The Conference will be assisted by several EC Officials from DGs for Agriculture and for Environment, by several Slovene state officials of both Ministries (for Agriculture and for Environment – including *Mr. Janez Podobnik*, Minister of Environment), by representatives of the

BirdLife International partnership. The project team will give presentation on BirdLife Recommendations for NATURA 2000 Management in Slovenia: Species Conservation Opportunities for Farming and Forestry.

Contacting and meetings with Ministry of Environment to encourage and promote adoption of corncrake Species action plan and appropriate Natura 2000 sites management planning

DOPPS has long tradition of deep and intensive relationship with the number of departments and agencies in frame of the Ministry for Environment. Project team is contacting various Ministry officials regularly. There are several contacts each week.

Most of activities in frame of lobbying for adoption of corncrake Species action plan and appropriate Natura 2000 sites management planning are foreseen to be carried out next year, when both documents will be ready. Nevertheless we had number of contacts and meetings with officials of Slovene nature conservation institute regarding approaches in Natura 2000 sites management planning

Encourage and promote adequate designation of Natura 2000 sites according to Birds Directive

All Important Bird Areas (IBAs), which meet scientific criteria to be designated as Natura 2000 sites, which DOPPS proposed to Ministry for Environment, were designated as such by Slovenian Government in April 2004. Nevertheless, some important parts of proposed areas were not designated. Reasons for not-designation were political and economical. Usually reasons were development plans for areas, which would cause destruction of habitats. All these reasons are not eligible according to Birds Directive.

This summer we started work to lobby for adequate designation. In July 2005 we prepared detailed analysis of SPAs officially designated by Slovenian government. Consequences of incomplete designation for conservation status of qualifying bird species were evaluated in analysis.

We'll use this report as scientific basis for our lobby work within Slovene Ministry for Environment and with the help of BirdLife European Community Office who submit it to the Nature Unit of DG Environment. In September 2005 meeting of DOPPS & BirdLife representatives with Desk officer at DG Environment is foreseen to discuss the topic.

Encourage and promote designation of Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park

Recently idea of Ljubljansko barje Landscape park experienced major brake through. Ministry for Environment decided to increase priority of designation and took over the coordination from hands of local municipalities.

In frame of this objective we performed large number of personal communications and some presentations to promote idea of Landscape Park. We had one meeting and several occasional consultations within project team to develop strategy.

We had one meeting and at least 10 occasional communications with Mrs. Zupanc, official of Municipality of Ljubljana, the coordinator of Landscape Park designation project. Together with her we prepared presentation for Commission for the Environment of Ljubljana city Council. We participated on workshop on occasion of visit of representatives of Réserve Naturelle de Lavours.

In municipality of Ig we had one meeting with mayor Mr. Cimperman. We had one meeting and several communications with Mrs. Skok, head of the Department of Urbanism.

We had one meeting with representatives of Institute for Nature Conservation to discuss the technical aspect of designation. We had at least 5 communications about this topic with various Ministry for Environment officials.

We cooperated also with NGOs. At several occasions we were in contact with Society for Ljubljansko barje. We organised one presentation for 300 participants at occasion of excursion of Turist society for Ljubljansko barje.

Variations, complications and delays

No delays in project activities implementation have been identified under this action. Additionally, some complement activities have been added to the main activities on national level:

- cooperation with Organic Farming Association in National Action Plan Preparation and proposal on integration of bird friendly management guidelines
- Natura 2000 promotion on inter ministerial level including Governmental Body for Local self government and Regional Policy, Governmental Body for European Affairs, Council for Sustainable Development
- cooperation with Slovene Chamber for Agriculture and Forestry in Natura 2000 and *Crex crex* friendly habitat management on a national level
- preparation of Conference on Natura 2000 in Slovenia and management guidelines for all SPAs promotion

Within the activities under action E1 we have identified these complications:

Relatively poor inter – ministerial cooperation between Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment. Since the beginning of the project, the project team has been facing the problem of a relatively poor information exchange and limited cooperation between both Ministries on nature conservation issues. This problem has been evident especially when integrating bird friendly guidelines into agriculture and rural development programmes. The reasons for that could be explained as a limited understanding of Natura 2000 within the Agriculture Sector. In many cases the designation of Natura 2000 sites is characterised only as a nature conservation project and not as a multi ministerial one. The project team lobbying within the Agriculture Sector is of extreme importance especially in times, when new agriculture and rural development strategies and programmes are being drafted on a national level. Taking an active membership in strategic project teams within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food gives the opportunity to represent the biodiversity conservation interests and prepare good basis for future conservation work.

Very limited knowledge about Natura 2000. The Natura 2000 in Slovenia could be identified as a relatively freshly baked project. As a consequence of that we could say that not many organisation are aware about the importance and commitments related to this project what causes several misunderstandings among general public. The Natura 2000 is often perceived with a strong negative view what could be attributed also to some state officials.

E2 – Consulting, educating and informing farmers, farming advisors and local authorities

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E2 Consulting, educating ... farmers, land owners ...					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

The action aims at an increased knowledge of farmers, other landowners, advisors and local authorities about the *Crex crex* conservation measures and appropriate grassland management. In the project period we have foreseen the following activities:

- to organise meetings and workshops with farmers advisors in the project areas,
- to organise 12 lectures for farmers in project areas,
- to publish 10 articles in agriculture magazines reporting about the project and
- to advocate for project at farmers meetings and fairs.

Progress in report period

Based on the experiences gained since the start of the project implementation the action E2 has been followed up through specific sub-actions as follows:

- meeting farmer advisors in project areas,
- meeting farmers in project areas,
- lectures for farmers and farmer advisors,
- articles published in agriculture magazines and
- advocating for project at farmers meetings and fairs.

Table 6: Summary of activities for sub-actions completed under action E in report period

<i>Sub-action (contacts)</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>N° of meetings / other</i>	<i>Project Area</i>
Meeting farmer advisors Mr. Zlatko Krasnič, Mr. Franci Palčič, Mr. Lojze Drašler (Lj. barje), Mrs. Milka Petrič (Cerknica), Mr Ludvik Košmrlj (Nanoščica)	Project update Lecture for farmers preparation Special grassland habitats management (mowing) Agri-environmental schemes promotion for <i>Crex crex</i>	4 meetings and field excursions More than 10 telephone conversations	LjB, Cer, Nan
Meeting farmers (Farmers from project areas)	Agri-environmental schemes promotion for <i>Crex crex</i> Special grassland habitats management – technical viewpoint Project update Diversification to organic farming production	More than 15 individual meetings (Agronomy specialist) More than 20 technical meetings (LIFE Warden)	LjB, Cer ³ , Nan
Lectures for farmers and farmer advisors	Agri-environmental schemes promotion for <i>Crex crex</i> Special grassland habitats management – technical approach	5 lectures in project areas with more than 550 participants	LjB (3 -lg, Podpeč, Vrhnika) Nan (1), Cer (1)
Articles published in agriculture magazines	Existing Agri-environmental schemes promotion for <i>Crex crex</i> Special grassland habitats management guidelines	1 Article in agriculture magazines 2 Articles in local magazines 1 Article in Svet ptic 1 Interview (Radio Slo.)	National / Local Media

Meeting farmer advisors

Regular contacts with farmer advisors have been kept during the whole report period. The LIFE project team has managed to improve its relation with farmer advisors and has gained the support of The Chamber of Republic of Slovenia for Agriculture and Forestry. In many cases the LIFE project team knowledge and experiences about *Crex crex* friendly grassland management has been used by farmer advisors to teach farmers. Strategic and technical issues have been

³ Informing and educating farmers about *Crex crex* friendly grassland management in area of Cerknica Lake has been implemented by the Project partner – Notranjski Regional Park

discussed within the meetings especially: different types of mowing on wet grasslands, grazing possibilities, incentives to farmers for habitat management, the future of farming in protected areas – Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park. In spring 2005, the IACS system integration processes has been started under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food which resulted in several challenges in approaching the 2005 Agri-Environmental Schemes (AES) application on a local level.

Meeting farmers

Weekly meetings with local farmers have been performed regularly in project areas with priority to LIFE Project Area - Ljubljansko barje. The local farmers' knowledge about grassland management has resulted as a key input for management guidelines preparation. Their knowledge and experience about mowing, mulching and other grassland management has been applied on LIFE Project farmland in Vrbovski Tali area.

The contacts with local farmers have been maintained in excellent condition especially in Ljubljansko barje area. The reason for that is the LIFE project office closeness to the project area. Additionally, activities under Action C-1, C-3 and the planned establishment of the Ljubljansko barje nature reserve in Vrbovski Tali represent an additional reasons for a more frequent visiting of this area.

The contacts with local farmers in Cerknica Lake project area have been maintained by the LIFE Project Partner – The Notranjski Regional Park. Limited contacts with farmers have been performed in Nanoščica River Basin area where most of the planned LIFE Project area was leased by a local farmer Mr. Otoničar. Regular contacts have been maintained with the mentioned farmer.

Lectures for farmers and farmer advisors

Lectures about *Crex crex* habitat friendly management have been prepared in cooperation with The Chamber of Republic of Slovenia for Agriculture and Forestry. According to the obligations within the Agri-Environmental Schemes (Rural Development plan for Republic of Slovenia 2004 – 2006) farmers have to take 15 hours lectures in 5 years (= 5 years contract). In year 2005 the lectures prepared by LIFE Project team were included in the national lecture program for AES⁴ applicants and were advertised on a national level by the head and regional offices of the Chamber⁵. The lectures performed by LIFE Project Team included a 1,5 hour presentation, leaflet dissemination and open discussion with the farmers.

5 lectures in report time with more than 550 participants were organized in the project areas (representatives of registered agriculture holdings). Additional 5 lectures about wet grassland habitat friendly management were organized outside the project areas.

The total participants number was estimated to over 300 farmers in project areas and over 700 in whole Slovenia including the farmers' meetings. Participants were mostly farmers with registered agriculture activity within the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The registration number KMG – MID is the preliminary condition for application to any CAP subsidies (Rural Development Programme measures) in Slovenia.

Articles published in agriculture magazines

4 Articles were published in national and local magazines in report period as a followed up of the project team and Chamber promotion of the *Crex crex* friendly grassland management. An interview was held in national media (Radio Slovenia) about Natura 2000 sites and project promotion.

Advocating for project at farmers meetings and fairs

Independently from the course on special grassland habitats management that was organized in cooperation with the Chamber of Republic of Slovenia for Agriculture and Forestry, the project team took part in other farmers' meetings. Meeting with local initiative and farmers was organised

⁴ Agri-Environmental Schemes

⁵ Chamber of Republic of Slovenia for Agriculture and Forestry

by project team in the area of Planinsko polje SPA. Special meetings were organised by the Slovene Association of Organic Farmers where LIFE Project and *Crex crex* was presented.

Project team presented lectures at three farmers meetings that were organised outside the project areas. The Planinsko polje area is an important SPA for *Crex crex*.

Farmer fairs are usually organised in 2nd half of the year (September, October). The project team has been already invited to take part in the traditional organic festival in Ljubljana city centre organised by the Slovene Organic Farming Association and to the "Ižanski Festival" Ljubljansko barje project area organised by the Municipality of Ig.

Variations, complications and delays

No delays in project activities implementation have been identified under Action E2. Additionally, some complement activities have been added to the main activities in project areas and other important *Crex crex* areas in Slovenia:

- Lectures about *Crex crex* friendly grassland management in Planinsko polje, Pivka and Banjšice plateau
- Meeting with farmer advisors and local farmers in Planinsko polje and Logatec
- Articles published in local magazine Logaške novice (Planinsko polje)
- Letter of cooperation between LIFE Project Team and National Organic Farmer Association for organic farming promotion in Ljubljansko barje (1 farmer in Ljubljansko barje area has been diversified to organic farming)
- Letter of support to Local Initiative from SPA Planinsko polje for conservation of local natural heritage.

Within the activities under Action E2 we have identified these complications:

Existing incentives and schemes at national level do not support bird friendly farming practices in LIFE project areas. The AE schemes (especially HAB and ETA Scheme) available under the Rural Development Plan for Republic of Slovenia 2004 – 2006 have been identified as currently the most important incentive to farmers in project areas and other important *Crex crex* areas. Based on discussions and meetings with farmers and farmer advisors we concluded that existing scheme conditions do not always fit best with the *Crex crex* friendly habitat management guidelines proposed by the project team. From this point of view we found it difficult to convince farmers to respect additional management guidelines that have not been yet integrated into the existing AE Schemes (for example: the grassland bird friendly type of mowing, set aside, low input farming, solitary bushes). The project team will focus on preparation of proposals for *Crex crex* habitat management guidelines integration into existing subsidy system within the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food (action C1).

*Poor promotion of nature conservation schemes and poor knowledge of farmer advisors about *Crex crex* friendly habitat management.* The Chamber is the main institution in Republic in Slovenia for farming advisory services. In many cases the farmers are not informed about best farming practices for *Crex crex* habitat management. The reasons for that could be related to poor knowledge of farmer advisors about nature conservation issues that have been strategically ignored for many years following the Common Agriculture Policy directions. The Chamber has recently started with nature conservation activities. The Lectures given by project team within the Chamber national programme for 2005 is an evident result of cooperation. In the future special emphasize is needed on giving lectures about *Crex crex* to farmer advisors in project Areas.

E3 – Brochure on *Crex crex* and proper grassland management

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E3 Brochure on <i>Crex Crex</i> and proper grassland management																

Actions foreseen in report period

No actions were foreseen in report period. Publishing the brochure describing the project results is foreseen for the last year of the project.

E4 – Species and project promotion on national level

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E4 Species and project promotion on national level					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

We planed to carry out several activities to promote corncrake, its conservation and the project to general public at national level. Bellow we present information on remaining activities foreseen to be completed in 2005 and 2006, after part of activities were performed in first year of the project (2004).

- 7 lectures for general public
- 4 night excursions for general public
- 1 lecture at “Youth ornithological research camp”
- publish and distribute a leaflet presenting corncrake and the project (in whole the project)
- publish 6 articles in national media (in whole the project).
- publish 2 articles in members magazine

Progress in report period

Lectures for general public

We carried out two lectures presenting Corncrake and the project. One lecture was carried out as in Radovljica library, second one we present in frame of lectures which are organized by Natural History Society of Slovenia (Prirodoslovno društvo Slovenije). The second round of lectures is in preparation and will be carried out this and next autumn.

Night excursions for general public

We carried out two night excursions. First one was organized as popular event in Cerknjško jezero. We announced event in two national nature history magazines, on national radio and at one local magazine. There were 30 participants, and 2 media reported about the event after it. Second night excursion was organised at Planinsko polje.

Lecture at “Youth ornithological research camp”

On the camp held in “Most na Soči” corncrake, its occurrence in the alps and its conservation was presented to 23 participants and their mentors. Participants also visited 2 Special Protected Areas nearby to listen the corncrakes and get to know their habitat.

Leaflet presenting Corncrake and the project

Leaflet presenting Corncrake and the project, including instructions for bird-friendly meadow management, was already published in July 2004. By mistake we didn't report about this in our Progress report for 2004. In the report period we continue to disseminate the leaflet. We used every occasion to distribute it to relevant people, such as government and municipality officials, farmers, local people, children in schools, visitors of fairs and at other occasions. Leaflet was printed in circulation of 10.000 copies. So far we distributed more than 6.000 copies.

Articles in national media

In the first year of the project 8 articles were already published in national media, which is more than it was foreseen for all project. Nevertheless we think it is important to continue informing general public about the project, the Corncrake and other endangered meadow birds. In the report period there were two articles published in very popular newspaper Slovenske novice. Two further articles on this topic were published in national newspapers Nedelo and Večer.

Articles in members magazine "Svet ptic"

In our members magazine we published 2 articles. One was about bird friendly meadow management subsidies in areas important for Corncrakes. The other article presented both LIFE Nature projects DOPPS is currently working on. We will continue informing our members on activities on the project in Svet ptic also in 2006.

Table 7: Summary data on species and project promotion on national level.

<i>Objectives foreseen for the whole project period</i>	<i>Activities accomplished in 2004</i>	<i>Activities accomplished in report period</i>	<i>Activities to accomplish till the end of the project</i>
12 lectures in 6 locations	5	2	5
5 night excursions	1	2	2
2 lectures on the camp	1	1	/
leaflet about the project	printed	disseminated	further dissemination
6 articles in national media	8	4	/
3 articles in Svet ptic	1	2	/

Variations, complications and delays

There were no complications, variations or delays.

E5 – Species and project promotion on local level

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E5 Species and project promotion on local level					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen till the end of the project

In addition to national level (E4) we planed to carry out several activities also to promote corncrake, its conservation and the project to local public at three project area SPAs. Bellow we present information on remaining activities foreseen to be completed after end of 2004 and before end of the project.

- 6 lectures for local people
- 1 night excursion for local people
- 20 lectures for elementary school children
- 5 excursions for children
- instructions for governesses, to be used with the colouring book
- 5 lectures in kindergartens
- 1 article in local media

Progress in report period

Table 8: Summary data on species and project promotion on national level.

<i>Objectives foreseen for the whole project period</i>	<i>Activities accomplished in 2004</i>	<i>Activities accomplished in report period</i>	<i>Activities to accomplish till the end of the project</i>
7 lectures	1	1	5
3 night excursions	2	0	1
20 lectures for elementary school children	0	29	/
5 excursions for children	0	1	4
colouring book for children	published	disseminated	further dissemination
instructions for governesses	0	0	will be published
5 lectures in kindergartens	0	1	4
10 articles in local media	9	2	/

Lectures about Corncrake and the project for local people in the project areas

One lecture for local people about Corncrake on Cerknica lake was carried out in Cerknica. Information on lecture was published in local media. 23 participants attended the lecture.

Night excursions to present Corncrake to the local people in project areas

No night excursions were carried out in the report period. One remaining foreseen excursion will be organised in the following year for local people in Nanoštica basin.

Lectures for elementary school children

Together 29 lectures for primary school children were carried out in this project period. 16 lectures were carried out in schools around Cerknica lake and 13 lectures on schools around Ljubljansko barje. 630 children attended the lectures. All children received a leaflet and a colouring book.

Excursions for local school children

Corncrake, its habitat, bird-friendly meadow management and other meadow birds were presented to schoolchildren on one excursion to Planinsko polje.

Colouring book for younger children and lectures to kindergartens

Colouring book published in previous year (2.500 copies) was reprinted in March (1.000 copies). It was distributed to kindergartens and lower grades of elementary schools. Next year we'll prepare instructions for governesses and carry out majority of lectures for kindergartens. We only carry out one lecture for kindergartens this year. It was at Bevke at Ljubljansko barje area. In this occasion all children in the kindergarten received the colouring book.

Articles in local media

In report period 2 articles were published in local media. One radio interview and one article were focused on event of night excursion at Cerknjsko jezero, including presentation of Corncrake and

bird-friendly meadow management. Our purpose to publish 10 articles in local media was reached, but we will continue publishing articles about the project in local media also in third year.

Variations, complications and delays

There were no complications, variations or delays.

E6 – Reserve promotion

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E6 Reserve promotion						■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in project period

In whole project period following activities are foreseen:

- to prepare and publish 10.000 copies of leaflet presenting reserve and Corncrake
- to distribute the leaflet through tourist information centres and at observatory in the reserve

Progress in report period

We didn't start with preparation of leaflet. This is not possible until location of water body is clear and until reserve spatial plan is prepared.

Nevertheless we use every occasion at events we organise in frame of other actions to promote idea of reserve. As a result, many people know about the idea and are looking with sympathies to see it realised.

Variations, complications and delays

Reasons for delay of this action are delays within action A3. See section A3 for further information.

E7 – Web site of the project

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E7 - Web site of the project						■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

The web site was created in 2004. It includes all information as foreseen. The WEB site was planned to be in Slovene language including a brief English summary.

It was foreseen to promote the web site in projects publications and at other occasions. It was foreseen to update the web page four times per year.

Progress in report period

In this report period we didn't manage to update the web page.

We organised project team meeting at which we elaborated the dynamic structure of the web page that will enable us to update the web page by ourselves. We discuss the upgrade with external company and clarify technical questions.

Materials in English have been prepared during the report period and are ready to be uploaded. This is planned to be carried out in October.

The web site address has been promoted regularly at all presentations and it was published in some articles.

Variations, complications and delays

Regular updating of the web site is at the moment the most delayed. At present our web page has static software structure. That means we can not update web page by ourselves. Instead we have to prepare materials, forward them to external company who updates the page. After this follows checking changes by us and correcting them by external company. We found this approach costly and time demanding. In project team identified alternative approach. We decided to upgrade web page to dynamical structure. This will at first stages need quite some time to develop. But, when done it will enable us prompt updating the page by ourselves. It will be easy and not time demanding.

We expect dynamic structure will be applicable by November 2005.

As a variation we mention special dynamic application for farmers' questions related the *Crex crex* habitat management which has been added to the web site.

This application allows the farmers to address e-questions via the web site directly to the projects agronomist specialist e-mail inbox. Its role is to process the question and to give immediate answers. The application has been used to some extent in the report period especially related to some clarifications within the agri-environmental schemes for 2005 and represents a useful tool for *Crex crex* promotion.

Very limited knowledge about e-communication has been identified in local communities in LIFE project areas. Based on our observations not many local farmers have access to internet what could be emphasized as a problem in information dissemination via web site.

E8 – Notice boards

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
E8 – Notice boards						■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

This action includes the setting up of notice boards in three project areas followed by an increased awareness and knowledge about *Crex crex* and Natura 2000.

Progress in report period

All activities under this action were already concluded.

We obtained permissions from land owners for erection of notice boards at Cerknjško (from Local community) and at Nanoščica (from Agricultural land fund). We applied and obtained necessary

Planning information⁶ for all three sites. We elaborated notice boards concept in April, designing followed in May while boards were produced in June. Boards were erected in July (Ljubljansko barje and Nanoščica) and in August (Cerkniško jezero).

Special emphasize is given to educational text which gives the main purpose of the project and general introduction of *Crex crex*. The notice boards are made of solid material and are very attractive to general public and visitors.

Variations, complications and delays

The setting up of notice boards in project areas was done approximately 1 year later as foreseen.

In our progress report for 2004 we were reporting on reasons for delay due complications in obtaining permits.

Another reason is a question of relationship of project team with local farmers. According to actions B1 and B2 not all parcels within the Vrbovski deli area has been leased or purchased until the end of the reporting period. Some farmers do still own private land in same area what needs to be respected in a way to achieve a general agreement about project promotion within the whole area. Local farmers could be extremely sensitive about project promotion on their own land without having special benefits. More than 10 different landowners were approached in different ways to achieve general agreement about notice boards locations.

Building up a strong relation with local farmers and landowners is essential for achieving long-term protection of *Crex crex* in Project Areas. If the notice boards would be placed at the beginning of the project without informing local farmers, various negative consequences could be expected (crashing of notice boards, dissatisfaction of local farmers, farmers' unwillingness to cooperate with the project team, etc.). The conclusion of this action in July 2005 (especially Ljubljansko barje area) could be attached to the results under action E2 – meeting farmers in project areas.

F1 – Project coordination

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
F1 Project coordination					■	■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

This action can be divided to two very different set of activities. First is project management or coordination while second is purchasing equipment to support the work of the project team.

Project management is foreseen to include:

- overall project management and planning
- project finance planning and management
- organization and implementation of activities
- reporting
- project team communication, exchange of information, internal meetings
- evaluating project implementation, results, achieving of goals
- training & education
- project administration
- internal control from the project Steering Committee

⁶ »Lokacijska informacija« is Planning information, it is document which summarise all regulations which apply to parcel in question; it is issued by local municipalities on request; it is obligatory first step in Land transaction procedures and in procedures of obtaining various permits for constructing.

Most of equipment we purchased in 2004. Remaining equipment foreseen to purchase after first year of the project is:

- car
- tripod for telescope

Progress in report period

(1) Project management

In course of project we developed a system of planning, communicating, supervising and reporting activities, which enables us control over project and ensure successful implementation of activities foreseen.

(1.1) Planning and organising

We prepared detailed work plan in which we in detail elaborated every action, braking it down to separate activities and tasks. For each task in work plan we identified timeframe and member of project team responsible for it. Work plan was prepared for whole period of project, while tasks to be implemented in next ca. half of year are elaborated more in detail. Periodically we revise work plan, e.g. once per two or three months, depending how fluently work is progressing and how things are getting complicated.

Using data from work plan we prepared also financial plan and project cash flow, which we revise each two or three months. Both, projects financial and cash flow plan are incorporated in overall society's plans to ensure society's financial stability. This is especially important because of large proportion of projects budget in overall society's budget.

(1.2) Communicating, supervising and reporting

Most of project team is situated in one big office equipped with four office desks. This enables close communication within team on daily basis. Project manager is practically every day in contact with every member of team. Either personally or through phone calls.

Every Tuesday we have reporting meeting with director, where (if possible) whole team is present. At this meeting every member of team reports on work in past week and about plans for next week.

In case of need due some more complex activities or to discuss various complications we organise ad hoc meetings of team, where either whole team or only relevant members of team are present. There is roughly one ad hoc meeting per week.

We strive to prepare brief minutes or report after each meeting or event.

(1.3) Administration

Every member of team is responsible to keep up to date archive of activities and tasks he/she is responsible for. Usually documents for each action and for more complex activities are archived in separate binders.

Every member of project team is obliged to fill monthly timesheets form regularly. After the end of the month all forms are checked and signed by project manager and archived in special binder.

Special attention we pay to financial documentation as invoices, receipts etc. When we receive new invoice firstly member of team, who is responsible for the action checks whether invoice is correct. Then project manager mark on it the number of action and the symbol of Category. Every invoice is approved by signing by project manager and by director. After approval project secretary execute payment, registers it to project financial report form, makes copy for projects archive and finally forward it for booking to company Aktiva Saldo d.o.o., which is external bookkeeping service for DOPPS.

(1.4) Steering

Due to the scale and importance of the project in frame of overall society's activity, DOPPS's Executive board decided, that it will carry out function of Steering committee by itself. Which means that this project is separate subject on agenda of almost every Board's meeting.

In this project period Board discussed this project at two meetings. Normally at the beginning of the discussion project manager presents report on work progress for the time period from past meeting. This is followed by board members questions to project manager and to director. After discussion Board reaches decisions, if needed. Board takes decisions only on most important questions on project, e.g. changes in project team.

(2) Purchasing equipment

In this report period we concluded purchasing procedure for purchasing car. Car was delivered in May this year. Another piece of equipment, which was purchased in this report period, was tripod for telescope.

Variations, complications and delays

In this section major complications to mention are changes in project team. We report about this changes in detail in section "Overall project management / Changes in project team".

F2 – Monitoring of *Crex crex* in Slovenia

Action	2003				2004				2005				2006			
	I	II	III	IV												
F.1 Monitoring of <i>Crex crex</i> in Slovenia						■	■	■	■	■						

Actions foreseen in report period

It was foreseen each year to carry out Corncrake counts on all major sites in Slovenia (8 Natura 2000 sites with Corncrake as a qualifying species).

Progress in report period

Between 15 May and 15 June 2005 we carried out Corncrake counts on most major sites in Slovenia. The main part of a coordination was done by conservation ornithologist (Luka Božič) from DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia, with support of local people volunteers and organisations (Notranjski Regional Park, Institute for Nature Conservation of Slovenia, Mr Vojko Havliček and others).

A first step was coordination of a network of fieldworkers, mostly volunteers. In this stage we performed app. 200 telephone contacts with fieldworkers. To each fieldworker we assigned at least one census plot. Secondly, this year we digitalised all census plots (altogether 62) for the first time. This is necessary to provide the best possible accuracy and repeatability of the method.

Additionally, we prepared detailed written instructions for fieldworkers to provide high level of method standardisation. We sent complete census documentation (incl. instructions for fieldworkers, map of the area, aerial photography of the census plot and special form for Corncrake census) to all fieldworkers (altogether 82).

After the counting period we collected 57 reports from fieldworkers and analysed the data.

Table 9: Organisation of Corncrake counts in Slovenia in 2005.

Area	Number of census plots	Number of fieldworkers	Number of census nights	Number of reports
Ljubljansko barje	43	37	82	41
Cerkniško jezero	6	30	2	10
Dolina Reke	1	1	-	-
Planinsko polje	1	3	1	1
Breginjski Stol-Planja	2	3	2	2
Porečje Nanošćice	3	3	4	1
Snežnik-Pivka	4	2	6	1
Kozjansko-Jovski	1	3	1	1
Total	61	82	98	57

In 2005 we managed to count Corncrakes on 7 Natura 2000 sites with Corncrake as a qualifying species (Ljubljansko barje, Lake Cerknica, Breginjski Stol and Planja, Planina polje, Nanošćica river basin, Snežnik plateau and Kozjansko-Jovski). Only Reka valley area was left out.

Table 10: Results of Corncrake counts on major sites in Slovenia.

SPA	1992	1999	2002	2004	2005
Ljubljansko barje	236	238	160	104	134
Cerkniško jezero	101	54	74	61	50
Dolina Reke	30	61	no data	13	no data
Planinsko polje	29	31	26	23	20
Breginjski Stol-Planja	14	41	44	88	60
Porečje Nanošćice	12	30	17	22	22
Snežnik-Pivka	no data	16	14	10	7
Kozjansko-Jovski	6	27	14	20	21
Total	428	498	349	341	314
Total - SLOVENIA (estimate)	510	600	450	400	380

Additionally, we analysed results of national Corncrake census carried out in 2004. In analysis we compared the results with previous censuses and evaluated possible population trends in Slovenia. Scientific article was prepared which is currently under review and will be published in December issue of *Acrocephalus* – scientific ornithological journal of DOPPS.

Variations, complications and delays

Corncrake count on Reka valley area was not carried out. In a stage of coordination local DOPPS volunteer was appointed for this task. Unfortunately he did not fulfil his obligation without prior notification to monitoring coordinator.

Overall project management

Changes in project team

In time frame of report period several staff changes took place. Fortunately, despite large number of changes, this didn't cause significant negative impact to project performance. All new project team members were before either already employed in DOPPS or were members and volunteers of society for many years and were members of DOPPS's Executive board. All new team members knew at least frames of project before.

Change of Project manager

On March 10th former project manager Polona Sladič gave notice. She wanted to change job because of her personal reasons. It was agreed, that Tomaž Jančar will temporarily take over this job, starting on May 16th 2005.

Tomaž was engaged as DOPPS director between 2001 to 2005. His four years term of office expired in April this year and he didn't stand as candidate for another term. Expiration of term of Tomaž coincide with Polona's notice, therefore it was agreed, that he takes over temporarily the project. As director he was well informed about the project. In addition Polona extensively introduced him to project in second half of April and in beginning of May.

It is foreseen that Tomaž will work as project manager until about the end of this year. In autumn we'll start to recruit permanent project manager. We expect will be introducing new project manager to project for at least two months, meanwhile Tomaž will remain project manager.

Tomaž is being member and volunteer of DOPPS since 1980 and he served as executive board member for many years. In last years he is performing post graduate study of nature heritage conservation.

Change of Education officer

Until end of 2004 Mateja Nose Marolt worked half time as Education officer, but she left DOPPS after then. In beginning of January we employed Eva Vukelič to this job. From January to May she was employed half time, afterwards full time while half time to this project.

Eva is a biologist (B.Sc.). She is member and volunteer of DOPPS for many years, last years she was also member of societies Executive board. She is good birdwatcher with special interest to bird conservation. Eva has great talent and interest for work with young.

Employment of Fieldworker / Warden

In spite of lots of effort in 2004 we didn't manage to find appropriate candidate for this job. Main reasons for unsuccessful recruitment are two: (1) we were looking for combination of good practical and technical skills and good knowledge of birds – which proved very rare, (2) in project preparation phase the salary foreseen for the job was estimated to low – suitable candidates willing to take this job for foreseen salary were not available. When realising this, we decided to increase offered salary.

In 2004, this job was only partly occupied. With ca. 30% of his working time helped us Andrej Figelj, who is otherwise employed at DOPPS as Technical assistant, he is also good in bird identifying. The fact, that this job was only partly occupied in 2004 didn't has significant negative impact to project performance. Agricultural machinery and land were purchased only in this year, while local farmers helped us to mow parcels in project areas of Ljubljansko barje and Nanoščica.

After we increased offered salary we finally succeeded to recruit new team member at the end of year 2004. On 1st of February we employed Željko Šalamun for full time as Fieldworker / warden. Željko is finishing his graduate study of forestry. His family owns a farm so he has a lot of experience with agricultural machinery, beside this he has sound bird knowledge. Similar to Eva he is member and volunteer of DOPPS for many years and last years he was also member of societies Executive board.

In case of need Andrej Figelj occasionally (few days per month) helps Željko in technical work.

Change of director

As mentioned before DOPPS has new director since 1st of April 2005. His name is Marijan Logar. Marijan is graduated economist with several years experience in managing work teams and smaller companies.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Maps – Project area Ljubljansko barje

- 1.1 Project area Ljubljansko barje
- 1.2 Parcels purchased and leased at Ljubljansko barje under actions B1 and B2
- 1.3 Habitat management on Ljubljansko barje project area 2004 under action C1
- 1.4 Potential locations investigated as possible water surface location under action A3 and C1

Appendix 2 – Maps – Purchasing land at Cerknjsko jezero project area (action B3)

Appendix 3 – Maps – Project area Nanoščica

- 3.1 Project area Nanoščica
- 3.2 Area moved at Nanoščica in 2004 under action C2

Appendix 4 – Illustrating the project

- 4.1 Photo documentation of actions
- 4.2 Presentation “Birds of agricultural landscape at Natura 200 sites”

(Appendixes 1-4 are bound with this Interim report)

Appendix 5 – Deliverable products

- 5.1 Draft concept of reserve for Spatial plan for Ljubljansko barje reserve
- 5.2 Leaflet presenting *Crex crex* and project
- 5.3 Colouring booklet for children presenting *Crex crex*
- 5.4 Annual *Crex crex* monitoring report for 2004 – As prepared to be published in ornithological journal *Acrocephalus* as scientific paper

Appendix 6 – Press cuttings on project and *Crex crex*

(Appendixes 5-6 are appended in separate folder)