



LIFE Project Number
LIFE10 NAT/SK/079

MIDTERM Report
Covering the project activities from 01/01/2012 to 31/12/2013

Reporting Date
<17/03/2014>

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
Protection of Common Swift (*Apus apus*) and bats in buildings in Slovakia

Project Data

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Project location | Slovak Republic |
| Project start date: | 01/01/2012 |
| Project end date: | 31/12/2015 Extension date: NA |
| Total Project duration (in months) | 48 months |
| Total budget | 1 481 248 € |
| Total eligible budget | 1 481 248 € |
| EU contribution: | 740 624 € |
| (%) of total costs | 50 |
| (%) of eligible costs | 50 |

Beneficiary Data

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
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2. Executive Summary

Nearly 99% of the Slovak swift population breeds in buildings. It is estimated that majority of Common Noctule population in Slovakia (thousands of individuals all year around) uses roosting sites in buildings, mainly prefabs in urban areas. Both birds and bats can be found in ventilation shafts, attic roofs, cracks, church towers etc. The species also occupy artificial boxes, in particular if there are no suitable sites available in the area.

Recently the greatest threat to birds and bats in urban areas has been the reconstruction and thermal insulation of buildings. This trend has been increasing and it is possible that the Swift population collapse within the next 10-20 years in most of the country if no appropriate measures are taken.

The overall project objective is to stop the recent decline of the Common Swift and Common Noctule populations in Slovakia in urban areas and to enhance their local populations through protection of their nesting and roosting sites. Both species are of the European importance. Therefore the project aims also to achieve their favourable conservation status in Slovakia. Specific project objectives are to: (1) halt the recent decline of populations in all cities in Slovakia; (2) to establish and further strengthen institutional conditions through seminars and trainings for stakeholders focusing on conservation of birds and bats in buildings; (3) protect existing nesting and roosting sites and establish new ones through installation of special boxes; and (4) increase public awareness on importance of birds and bats in ecosystems of urban areas and their protection.

There are several key deliverables and outputs of the project divided according to the project's actions:

| Action | Deliverable / Output | Achievements by 31/12/2013 |
|--------|--|---|
| A1 | Methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other species during the reconstructions and insulations of buildings | Annex A1.1 |
| A2 | Methodology for monitoring of Common Swift in urban areas | submitted along with Inception report in X/2012 |
| A2 | National database of nesting sites of Swifts | Annex D1.11; available on-line at http://aves.vtaky.sk/sk/apusbat |
| A2 | List of building keepers (managers) | submitted along with Inception report in X/2012 |
| A2 | Report from monitoring of Common Swift in 2012 | Annex A2.1 |
| A3 | 32 trainings, at least 160 participants | 12 trainings, 278 participants |
| A3 | at least 160 trained on the conservation measures for Swifts and bats | 278 stakeholders trained |
| A4 | National database of roosting sites of bats in buildings | Annex D1.11; available on-line at http://aves.vtaky.sk/sk/apusbat |
| A4 | Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in 2012-2013 | Annex A4.1 |
| A5 | Guideline for protection of birds and bats during insulation and reconstruction of buildings and its approval by the competent state authority | draft Guideline in Annex A5.1 |
| C1 | at least 40 model actions for protection of Swift applied | model actions applied at more than 71 sites; Annex C1.1 (Catalogue of model solutions) |
| C2 | at least 1200 boxes for Swifts installed | 911 boxes installed |
| C2 | 3 nesting walls installed | 1 nesting wall installed |
| C2 | increased population of Common Swift by approx. 20% on 16 sites | will be evaluated in the final report |
| C3 | practical model measures for bats applied at least at 40 sites | model measures applied at more than 476 sites; Annex C1.1 (Catalogue of model solutions) |
| C3 | at least 400 boxes for bats installed | 315 boxes installed |
| D1 | project's website | www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| D1 | leaflets (20 000 copies) | 19000 pcs in Slovak printed and disseminated |
| D1 | booklet (2000 copies) | ongoing |
| D1 | posters (1000 copies) | Annex D1.1 |
| D1 | stickers (4000 copies) | 28 000 pcs of stickers printed and disseminated |
| D1 | film | scenario and shooting is almost finished, final processing is ongoing |
| D1 | technical manual (1000 copies) | e-version is finished (Annex D1.1) |
| D1 | press releases (4), articles (20), reports and interviews on radio (5) and TV (4) | press releases: 3 articles: 77 reports and interviews on: radio: 6 TV: 21 (list of media outputs in Annex D1.5) |
| D1 | exhibition "Return of Swifts" installed at 8 locations | design of the exhibition is in Annex D1.1 |
| D1 | notice boards (10 pieces) | Annex D1.1; notice boards have been installed on dealt-with sites |
| D2 | at least 300 meetings organized with at least 3 participants per meeting | 2443 meetings with 3 participants per meeting (on average) |
| D3 | 80 lessons with excursions with at least 15 participants per meeting | 22 outdoor excursions for more than 120 participants organized |
| D3 | 180 lessons for children with at least 20 participants per meeting | 236 lectures for more than 1500 participants (mostly school kids) organized |
| D4 | 2 thematic workshops for at least 25 participants per workshop | 2 workshops, 57 participants |
| D4 | 16 regional meeting for stakeholders with at least 20 participants | 8 regional meetings, 102 participants |
| D4 | 2 international meetings | 1 international conference, 120 participants |
| E4 | 8 study tours (20 person days per visit, total 160 person days) | 5 study tours, 23 participants, total 86 person days |
| E4 | contacts established with at least 4 projects | contacts established with 11 projects |

Brief summary of each chapter of the report:

Administrative part: The project's implementation is divided into two phases: Inception phase (finished at the end of September 2012; actions carried out were described in Inception report) and Implementation phase (ongoing). Project's management team was established during the Inception phase. A questionnaire was developed to assess general public awareness on the topic. 98% of respondents support the project and 70% of them would provide financial support for installation of boxes (Annex E1.1).

Three meetings of the Project Steering Committee (representatives of MoE, SNC and project's beneficiaries) were held in 2012-2013. There were three monitoring missions (including field visits to the project's sites) organized in 2012-2013. Almost all actions have been carried out according to the project timetable. Installation of boxes was slightly postponed due to the public procurement procedure. The delay does not jeopardize the overall project goals.

Detailed description of activities carried out within the A, C and D actions is in the **technical part** of the mid-term report. It includes also description of the Action E.4 (networking with other projects). Within the A actions Methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other bird species during reconstruction and insulation of buildings (Annex A1.1) was elaborated. Monitoring of swifts and bats was carried out in 270 cities (including 8 regional capitals and 79 district cities) where more than 16 000 buildings were checked. In total more than 4 800 nesting sites of Swifts and 1 500 roosting sites of bats were recorded. Distribution records as well as list of important stakeholders are stored in the on-line database AVES Symphony and are available for public. The database includes also a module with data on dealt-with sites (recently more than 900 sites) available only for the project's staff. Based on the data reports from monitoring of Swifts (season 2012; Annex A2.1) and bats (season 2012-2013; annex A4.1) have been elaborated.

Based on the experience concerning implementation of principles on protection of birds and bats in buildings a draft guideline (Annex A5.1) have been elaborated (Annex A5.2). The guideline will be further modified also according to the new Law on Nature and Landscape Protection that came into force on 01/01/2014.

Within the actions C practical conservation measures for birds and bats were implemented. Specific measures for protection of birds were implemented on more than 71 sites, measure for bats on more than 476 sites and conservation measures addressed to both birds and bats on more than 314 sites in all regional capitals and other cities in Slovakia. In total 911 boxes for birds (2 812 nesting holes) and 315 boxes for bats were installed on buildings on more than 300 sites in 2012 and 2013 (relevant costs covered from the project's budget). In addition to that another 734 boxes for swifts and 832 boxes for bats were installed with financial support from stakeholders. So far one nesting wall for swifts (including boxes for bats) has been created in Revúca. Through implementation of a low-cost measure – installation of modified plastic grids on ventilation shafts in attics – more than 8 000 existing nesting and roosting sites have been preserved after the insulation and reconstruction of buildings. Conservation measures have been applied on prefabs as well as historical buildings, e.g. castles. Safe displacement of bats was implemented in more than 300 cases within Slovakia. Conservation measures on protection of summer colonies of bats were carried out in more than 7 sacral buildings.

To promote protection of birds and bats in cities leaflets *Common Swift* (9500 pcs; Annex D1.1) and *Under one roof with bats* (9500 pcs; Annex D1.2), stickers with Common Swift (28 000 pcs; Annex D1.3), and small calendars (250 pcs; Annex D1.4) have been produced and disseminated. LIFE+ logo and reference to the project are clearly visible on these deliverables. An intensive media campaign has been carried out to raise public awareness on the topic. Project was presented at 3 press conferences and through more than 100 media outputs: 77 articles, 21 reports on TV and 6 reports on radio. Complete list of media outputs is in Annex D1.5; copies of the media outputs are in Annex D1.6. A technical manual (electronic version) with detailed description of technical measures for conservation of birds and bats in buildings was elaborated (Annex D1.7). The project's web site was established during the inception phase. It is available at www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk and it is regularly updated. English version is under construction. Part of the web site (INTRANET) is accessible only for the project's staff and serves as a tool for communication and sharing draft documents etc. At www.facebook.com/navratdazdovnikov a special Facebook site on protection of birds and bats in buildings can be found. Design of the exhibition *Return of Swifts* is in Annex D1.8. Posters promoting protection of birds and bats in cities (Annex D1.9) were designed and will be disseminated to the public. Simple notice boards on the project (Annex D1.10) have been developed, informing about the compensation measures for protection of birds and bats and about the support of the Commission to the project. The notice boards were installed on the respective buildings (dealt-with sites). Shooting for a short documentary film (ca 25 minutes) was done especially during summer season in 2013. The film will be finalized by the end of 2014. In 2013 a competition for young designers was organized. The best designs will be used for promotional materials.

In 2013 more than 2 440 personal meetings with ca 3 participants per meeting were held to improve cooperation with stakeholders. For each dealt-with-site usually several personal meetings are necessary to secure appropriate implementation of conservation measures. Cooperation with SNC, universities and experts on protection of cultural heritage (regarding protection of bat colonies in historical buildings), foresters, eco-centres etc. has been established as well.

In total 236 lectures were given to public, mainly at schools (for more than 1 500 people). Another 22 outdoor lectures and excursions were organized for more than 120 people.

In 2012-2013 two national workshops and 8 regional meetings were organized for more than 150 participants, including the project's staff, external experts and volunteers. In October 2012 an international conference focused on protection of birds and bats during reconstruction and insulation of buildings (first such an event held in the region of Central Europe) was organized. The conference was attended by 120 experts and stakeholders from Slovakia and other European countries such as the Czech Republic, Spain, U.K, Poland, etc.

So far 5 study tours to the Czech Republic, Spain, Germany and Poland (23 participants, 86 total person days) were organized in the frame of the project. These include also a study tour of experts from Poland to Slovakia in order to exchange know-how and visit the project's sites with implemented conservation measures. Reports from the study tours are in Annex E4.1 and Annex E4.2. The project and its preliminary results were presented at meeting of the Advisory Committee of EUROBATS as well as on other national and international conferences and workshops. Contacts with 11 projects and initiatives on protection of birds and bats in buildings have been established over the first two years of the project implementation.

Evaluation of project implementation: The main immediately visible project results are: (1) results of the monitoring of Swifts and bats in cities; (2) implementation of conservation measures to preserve existing nesting and roosting sites, measures on protection of birds and bats such as safe displacement of bats from buildings; (3) media campaign, including workshops, lectures, excursions, etc.; and (4) international conference and networking. Effectiveness of conservation measures such as installation of boxes will be evaluated after a certain period of time because birds and bats are likely to shift to these artificial sites only if there is a lack of sites situated on not yet insulated and/or reconstructed buildings. To assess effectiveness of implementation of the *Guideline* will be possible only after its official approval by the relevant state authority and at least 1 year of its implementation in the field.

Benefits and sustainability of the project: Applied conservation measures and preserved nesting and roosting sites for the species on the already reconstructed buildings and/or on buildings with thermal insulation will serve their purpose and support populations of the species for long-term. Furthermore the sustainability of the project achievements will be safeguarded also through the approval and implementation of the Guideline on protection of birds and bats in buildings and through implementation of the respective legislation, in particular the Law on Nature and Landscape Protection which include articles related to the topic. Populations of bats and swifts play a key role in urban ecosystems as a biological shield against tiresome insects.

The project itself has created 25 new jobs out of which 13 are full-time jobs. Other new jobs are rising based on the demand for services, expertise, etc.

EU added value of the project: (1) Protection of common European natural heritage (both Common Swift and Common Noctule are migratory species); (2) Demonstration and replicability of the project in other EU and non-EU countries; and (3) The project is based on know-how and best-practice available and applied in Europe, setting viable and repeatable example of protection of species that are not sufficiently protected by national and EU legislation.

From the total budget of 1 481 248 EUR, in total 613 049,75 EUR has been incurred by 31/12/2013. This represents 41,39 % of the total project budget. The first pre-financing payment (40% of the maximum EC contribution) equals to 296 249,30 EUR. Total project's expenditures incurred over 2012 and 2013 represent 206,94 % of the first pre-financing payment. Thus the precondition of 150% threshold for mid-term pre-financing payment has been reached.

Coordinating Beneficiary as well as both Associated Beneficiaries may not recover VAT. Therefore expenditures including VAT are considered as eligible.

Eligible personnel costs are calculated according to average annual hourly rate and real amount of working hours spent on the project recorded in timesheets. Travel and subsistence costs were charged in accordance with the internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiaries. Travel costs include also expenditures of volunteers participating in monitoring of Swifts and bats in cities (Action A2 and Action A4). Concerning external assistance tenders were administered in accordance with the Slovak act on public procurement and internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiaries. By purchasing procedures for services (competitive tenders from potential subcontractors) rule "best value for money" was always respected. Invoices issued by subcontractors bear a clear reference to the LIFE+ project – code of the project, title/ project acronym or a specific number. Purchasing procedures have been administered in accordance with the Slovak law on public procurement and internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiaries. All equipment was purchased in accordance with the approved project budget. Exceptionally some equipment items have been purchased that was not envisaged in the project (8 micro-cameras, 8 bat detectors). These purchases have been communicated with and approved in advance by the Commission. Total costs per the budget category "Equipment" according to the grant agreement were not exceeded by these purchases. All expenses in this budget category "Consumables" were incurred in accordance with the approved project budget.

The coordinating beneficiary BROZ and associated beneficiaries keep an analytic system of accounting. This cost centre based system enables to follow the financing of each project (including project LIFE+) separately, and to trace each project's cost, expenditures and income. All expenses included in the financial report were paid and duly booked in the accounting system of the coordinating beneficiary BROZ or associated beneficiaries of the LIFE+ project.

According to the partner's agreements the Associated Beneficiaries provide technical and financial reports every six months (twice a year). The Associated Beneficiaries provide their financial reports in the same form as it is submitted to the European Commission.

At the beginning of the project's implementation pre-financing payment of 20% of the respective budget was transferred to the Associated Beneficiaries' bank accounts. Further payments are done according to the financial reports and submitted financial documentation (pay rolls, time sheets, etc.). Final payment to the partners will be done after the final approval of the project's costs by the European Commission.

3. Introduction

The project main objective is to stop the recent decline of the populations of Common Swift and bats, in particular Common Noctule in Slovakia caused by insulation and reconstruction of buildings in urban areas. It aims to enhance local populations of the species through protection of their nesting and roosting sites, introduction and implementation of appropriate conservation measures and through reaching a favourable conservation status of the species and their habitats.

Project has been implemented within the whole Slovakia, with focus on urban areas. The project area includes all 8 regional capitals, 40 district cities as well as other cities and villages with important local population of target species. The project actions take place mainly on prefabs and other man-made structures such as schools, chimneys, also church towers and sacral buildings in general. If needed the conservation measures have been applied on historical buildings, e.g. castles (Víglaš, Čachtice).

Thermal insulation and reconstruction of buildings that result in destruction of existing nesting and roosting opportunities for birds and bats are the main conservation issues targeted by this project. From the socio-economic point of view the project helps stakeholders to respect legal requirements related to biodiversity conservation. It increases effectiveness of the construction works and minimize cases of delayed construction works. Sharing know-how and providing assistance helps state authorities and decision makers to successfully implement national and European legislation on biodiversity conservation. Through project small private companies are supported as well (manufacturing and installation of boxes). In general implementation of the project actions lead to effective spending of financial sources allocated to both the construction activities (e.g. funds from State Housing Development Fund) and biodiversity conservation (e.g. funds provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic). The long-term project objective is to increase population size of Common Swift by at least 20% (on average) on 16 pilot sites and to stabilize the population size of Common Noctule on at least 16 locations.

4. Administrative part

4.1 Description of the management system

Project implementation period is set up for 4 years (01/01/2012-31/12/2015) and is divided into 2 main phases according to the project reports schedule.

Phase 01 – Inception phase: Phase 01 started on 01/01/2012 and ended on 31/08/2012. During the Inception phase the project management team (PMT), including the project manager, financial manager and representatives of the project partners SON and SOS/BirdLife Slovakia was established. Other project personnel, including 8 regional coordinators were employed as well. Information about the project and its preliminary outcomes is presented via project web site that was established in the Inception phase. More details about the project progress and activities carried out in the phase can be found in the Inception report submitted in October 2012.

Phase 02 – Implementation phase: Recently the project is in this phase that started in September 2012 and will finish at the end of the project. During this phase main focus is given to the implementation of the project actions A (preparatory actions), C (conservation actions) and D (dissemination and public awareness actions). It also includes E actions – project management, reporting and monitoring.

To assess general public awareness and level of acceptance implemented conservation measures, a questionnaire was developed and disseminated within the country (Action E.1). In total 109 filled in questionnaires were returned. In total 107 (98%) respondents expressed positive attitude towards the project and implemented measures. 75 (70%) of respondents would financially supported installation of swifts and bats boxes on buildings. More detailed evaluation of questionnaires is in Annex E1.1.

Based on the project proposal a detailed work plan was prepared at the beginning of each year. The plan is evaluated and updated during the PMT meetings and meetings of the project staff. In the work plans each action is described in details, and includes deadline for delivering preliminary results and/or drafts and name(s) of responsible person(s). After each meeting an update on the implementation of the plan is added to each action. PMT meetings are organised on a regular basis at least 6 times per year. In addition to that there is an intensive communication between the project manager and his assistants and the representatives of the project beneficiaries via e-mail and phone.

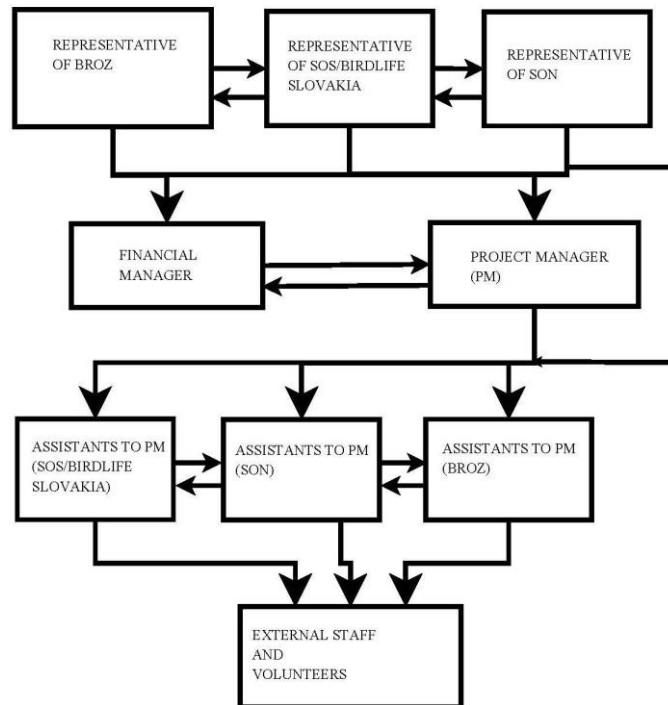
In accordance with national legislation, permission to manipulate with protected species and their habitats has been obtained for the project staff. There have been organized also trainings on work safety BOZP (25/05/2012 in Bratislava, 29/05/2012 and 26/02/2013 in Zvolen) and all members of the project team obtained relevant certificates that allow them to be present on the spot during construction works and to move on scaffoldings while following the respective safety rules. Lists of participants are in Annex C2.1.

During the reporting period there were no amendments to the Grant Agreement. Amendments to the Grant Agreement related to the modifications in the project's co-financing were signed in January 2014. Partnership agreements between the coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries were signed during the Inception phase and submitted to the Commission along with the Inception report in October 2012.

Project Steering Committee (PSC):

Members of PSC are representatives the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (MoE), State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC) and project's beneficiaries (BROZ, SON, and SOS/BirdLife Slovakia). The 1st PSC meeting was held on 24/09/2012 and results achieved in the Inception phase were presented. In 2013 two meetings of PSC were held (25/03/2013 and 30/10/2013). All meetings took place at the premises of MoE; minutes were taken. Lists of participants are attached to this report (Annex E1.2). In the second half of the project lifetime PSC meetings will take place regularly 2 times per year.

Project organigramme:



Representatives of the project beneficiaries serve as supervisors of the project implementation and provide expert consultations to the project staff if required (e.g. in elaboration of official statements and documents addressed to decision makers, employment of the project staff). Project manager (BROZ) is in charge of the overall project implementation, including reporting and communication with the Commission and external monitoring team. He regularly communicates with all members of the PSC and PMT, including assistants to PM, regional coordinators and supervisors. Financial manager (BROZ) is responsible for correct accounting and elaboration of financial reports. Assistants to PM coordinate and implement project activities in the respective regions and communicate with the regional coordinators and volunteers. They also elaborate partial progress reports according to the partnership agreements. External staff and volunteers help with the monitoring and conservation actions in the field.

Project office is set up in Bratislava at BROZ's premises. As of January 2014 the address is: Na Riviére 7/a, 841 04 Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Partner's offices are in Bardejov (SON) and Bratislava (SOS/BirdLife Slovakia).

Progress report No. 1 is due on 31 January 2015 and will refer to actions carried out in 2014.

4.2 Evaluation of the management system

Both project partners are well experienced NGOs in regard to the project topic as well as in project management. Along with BROZ as the coordinating beneficiary they contribute into smooth running of the project according to time schedule and project proposal. All beneficiaries have established internal accounting system to keep all project expenditures transparent and according to the requirements.

Communication with the Commission and Monitoring team is done by BROZ. Non-significant amendments to the budget are communicated with the donor in advance. There were 3 Monitoring missions organized in 2012 and 2013:

18-19/04/2012 – Introduction of PMT and presentation of working plans for the Inception period; field visit on project sites in Bratislava.

26-27/11/2012 – Evaluation of the Inception report and presentation of preliminary results; field visit to project sites in Bratislava, Nitra and Nové Zámky and participation at a seminar for stakeholders in Zvolen.

10-11/12/2013 – Presentation of preliminary results; field visit to project sites in Považská Bystrica and Púchov, meeting with the head of the district environmental office in Považská Bystrica.

Lists of participants are in Annex E1.2.

Ganntt-chart – overall progress of the project (as of 31/12/2013)

| Action Number | 2012 | | | | 2013 | | | | 2014 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|---|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|
| | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV |
| A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or action plans: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1 | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| A.2 | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | |
| | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| A.3 | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| | | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| A.4 | | | X | | | | X | | | | X | | | | X | |
| | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| A.5 | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| B. Purchase/lease of land and/or rights: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C. Concrete conservation actions: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C.1 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| C.2 | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| C.3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| D. Public awareness and dissemination of results: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D.1 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| D.2 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| D.3 | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | |
| | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| D.4 | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |

| Action | 2012 | | | | 2013 | | | | 2014 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|---|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|
| Number | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV | I | II | III | IV |
| E. Overall project operation and monitoring: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E.1 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| E.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E.4 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |

X - proposed timetable

X – real timetable

5. Technical part

5.1. Technical progress, per task

5.1.1 Action A1: Elaboration of methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other species during reconstruction and insulation of buildings

Responsible beneficiary: SOS/BirdLife Slovakia

Deliverables of the action:

Methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other species during reconstruction and insulation of buildings – e-version available online

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

The methodology is delivered with a delay. In 2012 and 2013 a high number of demands for actions on protection of birds and bats in buildings showed up. Therefore focus was given to the implementation of C actions. Experience and knowledge gained from on-the-spot actions were transferred into the methodology which now includes more information and practical experience. In the meantime the project staff used other tools such as power-point and photo presentations, prototypes of boxes and modified plastic grids etc. when communicating and explaining conservation measures to stakeholders.

Problems and their solution:

There were no significant problems during implementation of the action.

Recent progress of the action:

The methodology has been finished and its e-version has been disseminated to the target audience, mainly the project personnel and nature conservation professionals. As indicated in description of the project action, it includes general characteristics of target birds and bats species that are threatened by reconstruction and insulation of buildings, methods of their monitoring in urban areas and main threats to the species. National and international legislation related to construction works and species conservation is described as well. The most important part of the methodology is detailed description of existing suitable measures on protection of species in buildings and best-practice examples on their implementation in Slovakia as well as in other European countries.

The methodology is considered an open document that will be regularly updated based on up-to-date knowledge and experience on protection of species in buildings and implementation of the relevant technical measures. Therefore it is not foreseen to produce a paper version of the document. Priority is given to its dissemination via electronic media, mainly the project web site and web sites of the project's partners and state institutions. In the upcoming project implementation period it will be used by the project staff and other experts when dealing with particular conservation issues in the field. It will also serve as a source of information for presentations on seminars and meetings addressed to stakeholders. Final version of the methodology in .PDF format is attached to this report (Annex A1.1).

5.1.2 Action A2: Monitoring of populations of Common Swift on selected urban areas

Responsible beneficiary: SOS/BirdLife Slovakia

Deliverables of the action:

Methodology for monitoring of Common Swift in urban areas – attached to the Inception Report submitted in October 2012

National Database of nesting sites of Swifts (**Annex D1.11**) – available online at <http://aves.vtaky.sk/sk/apusbat>

List (database) of building keepers (managers) – attached to the Inception Report delivered in October 2012; available and regularly updated at <http://aves.vtaky.sk/sk/apusbat>

Report from monitoring of Common Swift in 2012 (**Annex A2.1**)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

According to the project proposal monitoring reports on Common Swift from 2012 and 2013 were supposed to be delivered by the end of September 2012 and September 2013, respectively. Detailed processing and interpretation of the data gathered during the monitoring took more time and personal capacities than envisaged. This fact in combination with problems described below resulted in a delay in delivering the reports to the Commission. However, this delay has not had any negative impact on the implementation of the other project's activities according to the project's timetable. Report from the monitoring carried on in 2013 will be delivered by May 2014.

Problems and their solution:

The only problems impacting implementation of the action were those related to inappropriate weather conditions that have significantly influenced the occurrence of swifts and their diurnal activity.

Recent progress of the action:

Monitoring of Common Swift has been carried out in all 8 regional capitals and in all 79 district cities. In addition to that the project staff and volunteers undertook monitoring in another 183 cities. Detailed monitoring that will be repeated every year will be carried out in 48 cities (including 8 regional capitals). These cities have been selected according to data gathered during this initial monitoring. In total 16 080 buildings in 270 cities in Slovakia were checked over the first two years of the project lifetime. Monitoring was carried out mostly during the nesting season (May – August), partly also before and after the season. Project staff is well-experienced and capable to identify buildings suitable for nesting of Swifts even without direct observation of birds. In total 4 836 nesting sites of Common Swift were recorded on buildings. In addition to that another 10 nesting sites of Common Swift were recorded in roofs of sacral constructions, mainly churches. Data were collected by the project's staff as well as volunteers. Volunteers were trained and supervised by the project's staff. The volunteers have done the work free of charge. If necessary incurred travel costs were reimbursed.

To be able to check also not-easily accessible places on buildings (e.g. ventilation shafts, crevices between panels) 8 micro-cameras have been purchased and distributed to all 8 regional coordinators. Purchase of the cameras has been approved in advance by the Commission letter No. 860242, dated on July 13, 2012.

Standard methodology for monitoring developed during the inception stage of the project implementation was used. Data are gathered and processed in the on-line database AVES Symphony in the module APUS/BAT (see Annex D1.11). There are two specific sub-modules developed: (i) records on distribution of the species targeted (public access); and (ii) “dealt with” sites, i.e. the sites where some of the C-actions have been suggested or implemented (restricted access only for the project staff).

Records on distribution

Recently there have been more than 7 000 records on occurrence of Common Swift and bats in buildings in Slovakia. This module is open for public and includes records on the existing nesting sites and suitable buildings (i.e. potential nesting sites). Each locality/building is recorded separately. Each record includes the following information: full address, geographical coordinates, date of the record, weather conditions, number of floors in the building, contact details on owners/managers, name of species and number of individuals, species behaviour characteristics (nesting, building nest, feeding young, etc.). Data can be downloaded as a “notebook record”, including a map of the exact location of the site. Filter tool is available to select data from a specific city, location, for specific species (e.g. Common Swift, house martin) etc.

“Dealt with” sites

Recently there are more than 900 records on such sites in the module. This module has been developed to help the project management and staff to monitor reconstruction, insulation and other activities ongoing on the buildings with recorded nesting sites of the birds and bats. It includes general information on the locality, number of nesting sites before and after the insulation or reconstruction works as well as detailed information on the applied measures (e.g. number and type of Swift boxes, number of ventilation shafts opened, etc.). It also includes “working” (confidential) data addressed to the project staff. Therefore the module as such is not accessible for general public. “Dealt with” sites are monitored regularly and data are recorded (grouped) in “seasons” (1 season = 1 year). Records from seasons (e.g. number of individuals observed) are connected with the previous module (records on distribution) and through this connection are available for public. It is foreseen that this module will be used for recording data on occupation of installed nesting boxes as well.

An example of a record of Common Swift and form of a “dealt with” site is in Annex D1.11.

Along with monitoring contact details on building keepers and construction companies have been gathered. These data are also available in the Aves database. List of contacts of the most important stakeholders was elaborated and attached to the Inception report.

Based on the data processed in the on-line database, the annual reports from monitoring of Common Swift have been elaborated. Annual report for 2012 is attached to this mid-term report (Annex A2.1). In the reports a list of mapped cities is elaborated for each of the 8 regions separately. For all the listed cities the following maps using the Open Street maps tool were prepared: (i) map of distribution of existing and potential nesting sites, (ii) map of existing nesting sites after implementation of conservation measures. Data are evaluated and presented per 1 x 1 km square grid. In addition a table with applied measures including the name of the site and status of nesting possibilities before and after the implementation of the conservation measures was elaborated for all evaluated cities. Different colours are used to distinguish squares with different results:

Blue colour – number of localities with preserved (unchanged) number and status of nesting sites/hollows achieved through intervention of the project staff; localities with the same

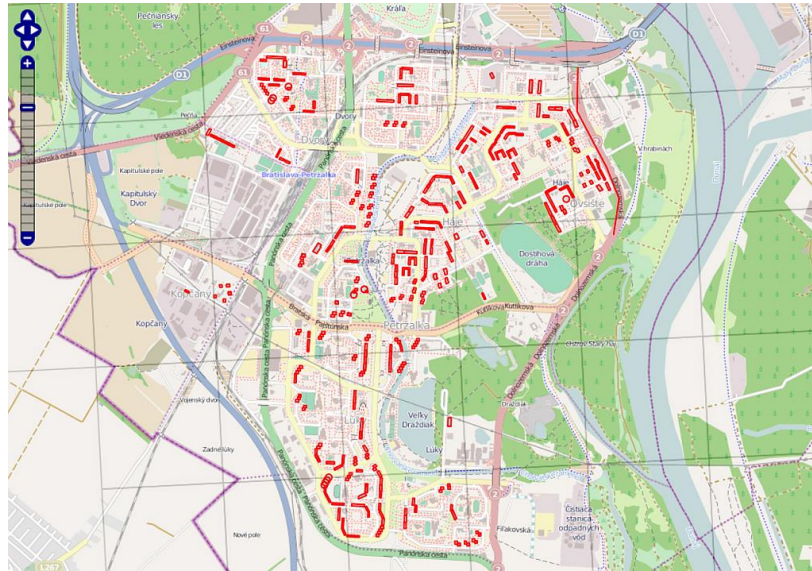
number of nesting sites/hollows achieved through preservation of existing possibilities and/or implementation of compensation measures (e.g. installation of Swift boxes) as it was before insulation and/or reconstruction of buildings.

Green colour – number of localities with increased number of nesting sites/hollows.

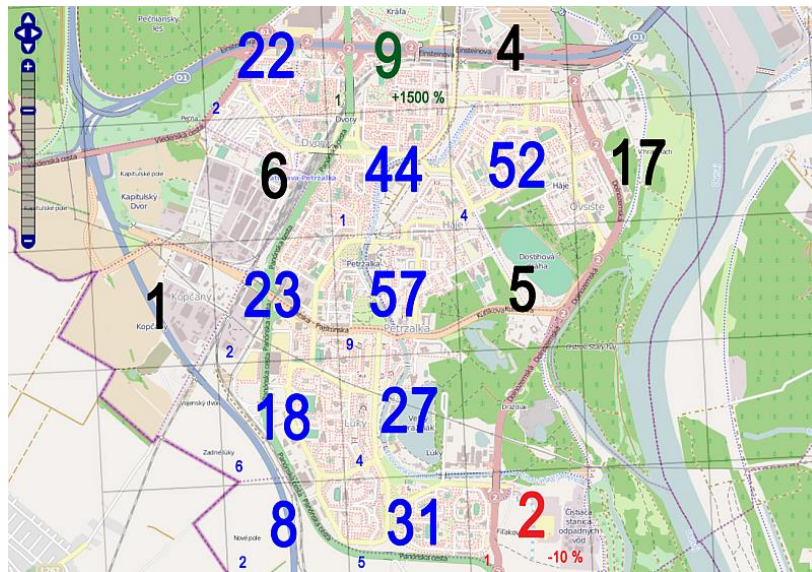
Red colour – number of localities with declined number of nesting sites/hollows due to reconstruction and insulation of buildings.

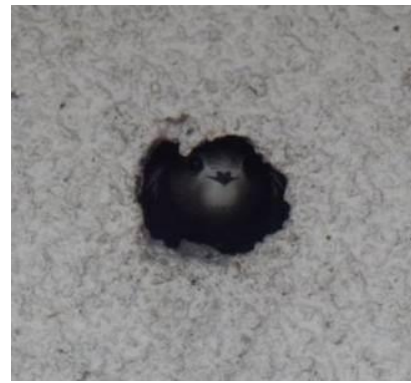
Below is an example of a map with existing and potential nesting sites **before** (Map A) and **after** (Map B) implementation of conservation measures in Bratislava-Petržalka (figures refer to number of sites).

Map A:



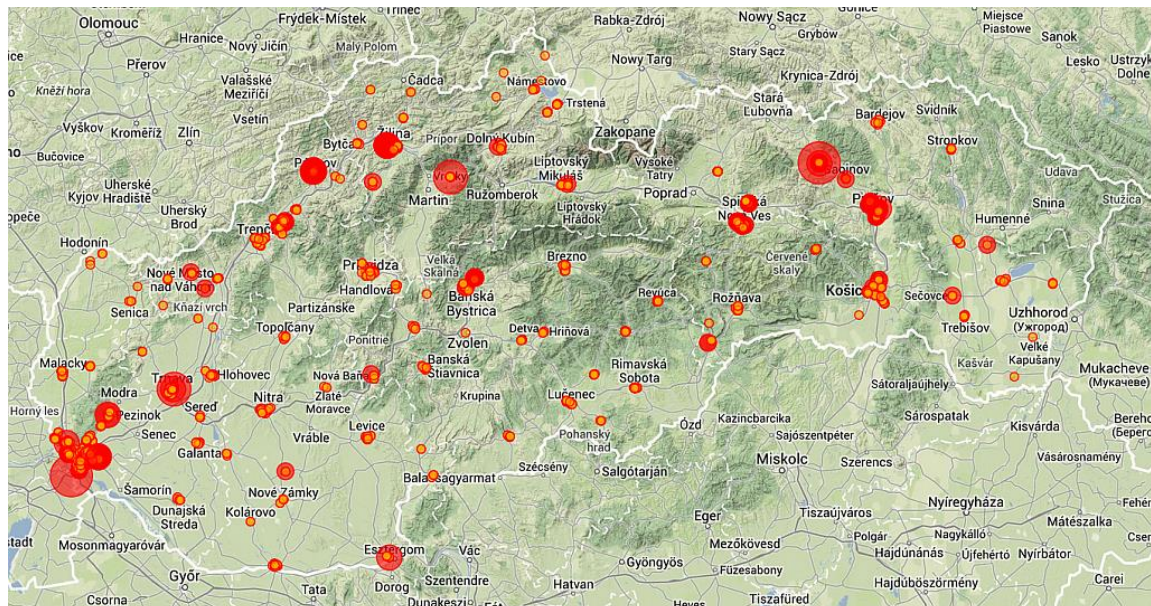
Map B:





Picture A2-1: Swifts in ventilation holes in attics. The picture on the left was taken with micro-camera)

Monitoring of Common Swift in 2012 was carried out on 77% of the area of the Slovak Republic. Number of nesting pairs varied between 20 242 and 20 862. Distribution and number of nesting sites is presented in the following map:



Applied scale (number of nesting pairs recorded): 1. < 50, 2. from 50 to 100, 3. from 100 to 200, 4. from 200 to 400, 5. > 400, maximum number is 800.

In total 3 422 nesting localities of Common Swift on buildings were recorded in 2012. Reconstruction and insulation works were carried out on 190 buildings with the total number of 3 267 nesting sites/hollows occupied by birds (out of the total number of 20 082 existing sites/hollows on these buildings). Through technical and compensation measures, mostly installation of modified plastic grids on ventilation shafts and special nesting Swift boxes, in total 7 533 nesting sites/hollows have been preserved, respectively created. It can be concluded that the original nesting conditions for Common Swift on the buildings have been preserved (and even increased on some sites) despite of their insulation and reconstruction.

Based on the results from the first monitoring carried out in 2012, 8 regional capitals and another 40 cities were selected for further rounds of monitoring of Common Swift in 2013-2015. In the project it was foreseen that all district cities would be included. However, the monitoring data gathered in 2012 revealed that there were several other (non-district) cities with more important (numerous) populations of Common Swift. Therefore we have decided to slightly modify the list of cities for further monitoring and to focus on the most important local populations within the country. Thus the regular monitoring has been undertaken in the following cities since 2013:

Bratislava region – Bratislava, Malacky, Pezinok, Senec; **Trnava region** – Trnava, Galanta, Hlohovec, Piešťany, Dunajská Streda; **Nitra region** – Nitra, Komárno, Šaľa, Topoľčany, Nové Zámky, Levice; **Trenčín region** – Trenčín, Prievidza, Púchov, Považská Bystrica, Dubnica nad Váhom, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Myjava; **Žilina region** – Žilina, Martin, Ružomberok, Námestovo, Liptovský Mikuláš; **Banská Bystrica region** – Banská Bystrica, Brezno, Revúca, Žiar nad Hronom, Lučenec, Zvolen, Rimavská Sobota; **Prešov region** – Prešov, Bardejov, Kežmarok, Levoča, Sabinov, Lipany, Poprad, Stará Ľubovňa; **Košice region** – Košice, Gelnica, Rožňava, Michalovce, Spišská Nová Ves, Moldava nad Bodvou.

5.1.3 Action A3: Education and training of key stakeholders and decision makers

Responsible beneficiary: SOS/BirdLife Slovakia

Deliverables of the action:

In total 12 trainings and seminars for 278 stakeholders were organized in 2012 and 2013.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected number of stakeholders trained in protection of birds and bats during reconstruction and insulation of buildings has been reached.

Problems and their solution:

Since beginning of the project Action A3 has been very much linked with Action D2 (meetings with stakeholders). In the course of the project implementation we have learned that most of the stakeholders tend to prefer smaller informal on-site meetings rather than larger “official” meetings (with more participants, official invitations, speakers, etc.). Therefore main focus is given to on-the-spot meetings (Action D2).

Recent progress of the action:

Trainings were focused on technical and conservation measures and relevant legislation related to the protection of birds and bats in buildings. Best-practice examples from Slovakia and other European countries were presented as well. Some of the seminars were organized jointly with municipalities (e.g. in Bratislava and Žilina). That is a very positive signal on the increasing interest and active participation in awareness building on the topic.

| No. | Date | Place | Number of participants |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 1. | April 2012 | Banská Bystrica | 25 (decision makers, architects) |
| 2. | April 2012 | Jelšava | 58 (voluntary members of Nature guard) |
| 3. | February 2013 | Bratislava | 19 (representatives of WEBER-TERRANOVA) |

| | | | |
|-----|---------------|------------|---|
| 4. | March 2013 | Košice | 18 (construction companies, building managers, architects) |
| 5. | March 2013 | Prešov | 37 (decision makers, construction companies, building managers, architects) |
| 6. | March 2013 | Žilina | 9 (decision makers, professionals from the State Nature Conservancy) |
| 7. | April 2013 | Trenčín | 30 (building managers, decision makers, architects) |
| 8. | April 2013 | Bratislava | 34 (decision makers) |
| 9. | October 2013 | Košice | 10 (representatives of INNOVIA) |
| 10. | October 2013 | Prešov | 3 (building managers, construction companies) |
| 11. | November 2013 | Žilina | 14 (decision makers, building managers, architects, construction companies) |
| 12. | December 2013 | Bratislava | 21 (architects, decision makers, students) |

Respective lists of participants are attached in Annex A3.1.

The project staff members have been communicating with the stakeholders on a daily basis and there were more than 2 440 such “small” ad-hoc meetings over the reporting period. The purpose of and the topics discussed at these meetings (under Action D2) have been very similar to those presented at trainings and seminars (under Action A3). Best-practice examples have been presented at these small on-site meetings in the field by using electronic tools, pictures etc. Thus the seminars and trainings with stakeholders (Action A3) have been partly replaced by these personal on-site meetings (Action D2). Therefore it has to be pointed that although the total number of the seminars organized in regional capitals during reporting period was smaller than envisaged in the project, the goals of Action A3 (increased awareness of decision makers, construction companies, architects and other stakeholders on the protection of birds and bats in buildings) have been in large extend reached and even exceeded by these personal on-site meetings (Action D2).



Picture A3-1: Seminars for stakeholders in Bratislava and Prešov

5.1.4 Action A4: Monitoring of populations of Common Noctule on selected sites

Responsible beneficiary: SON

Deliverables of the action:

Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in urban areas in winter season 2012-2013 (**Annex A4.1**)

National Database of roosting sites of bats (**Annex D1.11**) – available online at <http://aves.vtaky.sk/sk/apusbat>

Methodology for monitoring of Common Swift in urban areas – attached to the Inception Report submitted in October 2012

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Data from monitoring of bats in buildings indicate that the most suitable period for the monitoring is February – March. That time bats are very active and it is easier to detect them. Usually there are no construction works ongoing during winter season. Therefore data on bats occurrence recorded in spring time well represent also the status as it was by the end of respective previous year. Delay in delivering the report for the winter season 2012-2013 was mainly caused by time consuming data processing. Data were processed in detail, evaluated per 1 x 1 km square for all 8 regional capitals. The following reports will follow the structure of this first report. Next Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in winter season 2013-2014 will be delivered by May 2014.

Problems and their solution:

Originally foreseen methods of monitoring of bats do require special expertise and experience. In order to involve volunteers and less-experienced staff in terms of bats monitoring into the implementation of the action and to collect as much data as possible it was decided to apply the method of monitoring of potential and existing roosting sites in buildings.

Recent progress of the action:

Monitoring of Common Noctule and other bats has been carried out in all 8 regional capitals and in all 79 district cities. In addition to that, buildings in another 183 cities were checked as well. Detailed monitoring that is to be repeated every year has been carried out in 8 regional capitals. In total 16 080 buildings in 270 cities in Slovakia were checked over the first two project years (2012, 2013) and 1 500 roosting sites of bats were recorded. Data were collected by the project's staff as well as volunteers. Volunteers were trained and supervised by the project's staff. The volunteers have done the work free of charge. If necessary incurred travel costs were reimbursed. An example of a record of occurrence of bats in a building is in Annex D1.11.

Besides the Common Noctule also the other bat species were recorded in cities (e.g. *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). Special attention was given to the monitoring of summer breeding colonies of bats mainly in historical buildings, including churches. Out of 141 checked buildings other than prefabs (e.g. churches, castles, schools, etc.) bats were recorded on 55 sites (see maps below).

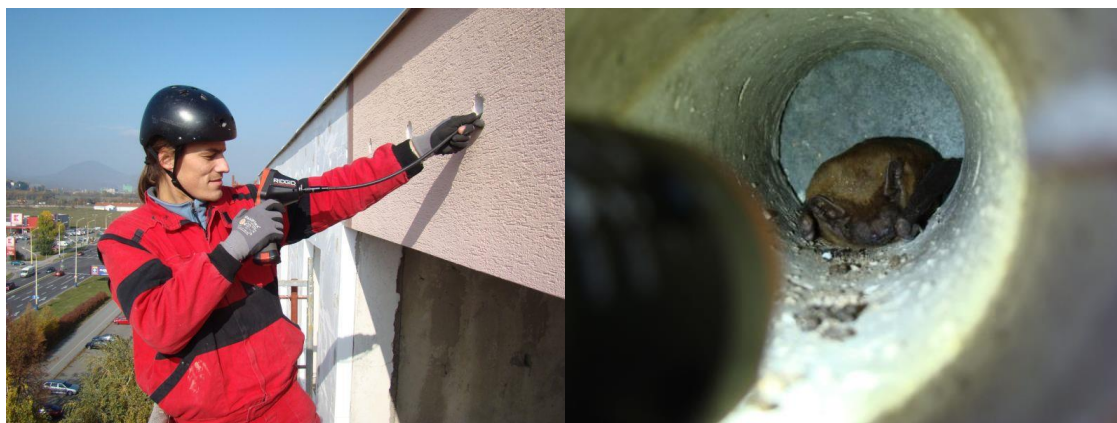
One of the most important breeding colonies of *Myotis myotis* (with about 2400 individuals) was discovered in the roof of a school in Dolný Kubín which reconstruction is foreseen for

2014. With representatives of the city (the building is owned by the city) it was agreed that appropriate conservation measures would be applied during the reconstruction to protect the colony and preserve this important roosting site for the future.

Standard methodology for monitoring of bats developed during the inception stage of the project implementation was used. Data have been gathered and processed in the on-line database AVES Symphony in the module APUS/BAT (its detailed description is given under Action A2). Method of visual observation of roosting sites on buildings proved to be very useful in terms of the project goals. To be able to check also not-easily accessible places on buildings (e.g. ventilation shafts, crevices between panels) 8 micro-cameras have been purchased and distributed to all 8 regional project coordinators. Purchase of the cameras has been approved in advance by the Commission letter No. 860242, dated on July 13, 2012. Moreover, all 8 regional coordinators have been provided with easy-to-use bat detectors that have been very helpful for monitoring of flying activity of bats. Purchase of the bat-detectors has been approved in advance by the Commission letter No. 1323552, dated on May 24, 2013.

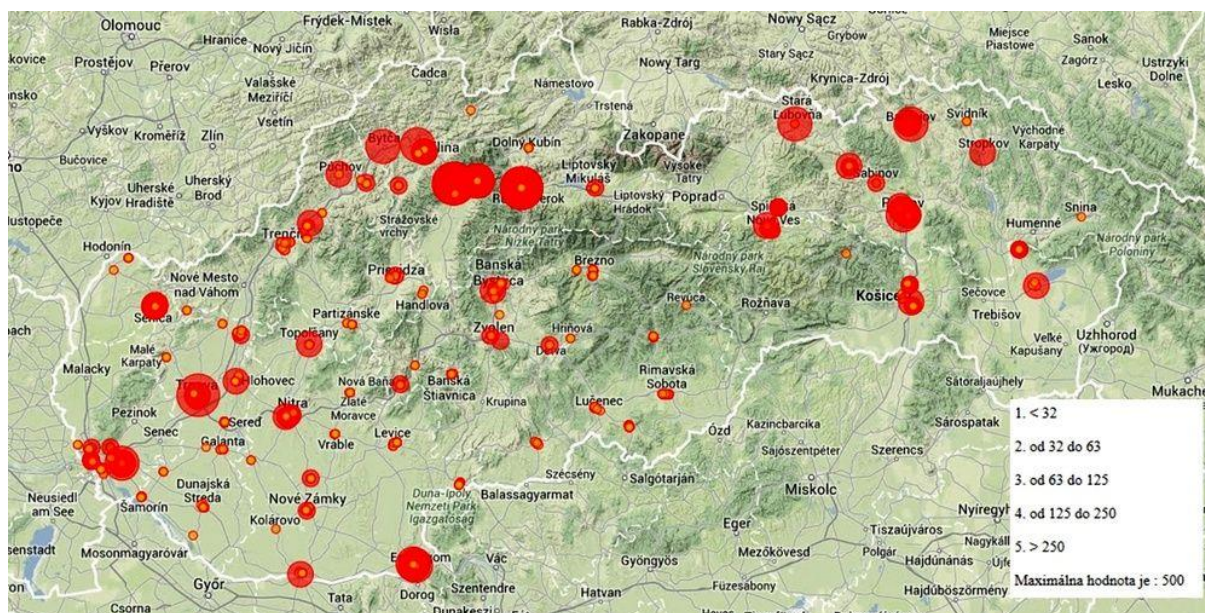
For protection of bats in urban areas it is very important to know distribution of roosting sites – those occupied by bats as well as potential sites because one such a site can accommodate from several hundreds to thousands of bats. Conservation actions aim to protect the sites and to ensure that their distribution within the regions and whole country is sufficient to secure long-term favourable status of the species. Based on data collected in 2012 and 2013 maps of distribution of roosting sites of bats in urban areas and distribution of summer colonies of bats were elaborated (see below).

Monitoring in winter season 2012-2013 (bats hibernate from October to March) was carried by using the above described method of visual observations. Results of the monitoring and their evaluation are presented in the attached *Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in urban areas* (Annex A4.1). Data were processed via using a grid with 1 x 1 km squares. Number of buildings with roosting sites per square was evaluated for all 8 regional capitals. Roosting opportunities and their distribution differs between cities. The highest density was recorded in Prešov (approximately one roost per square kilometer).

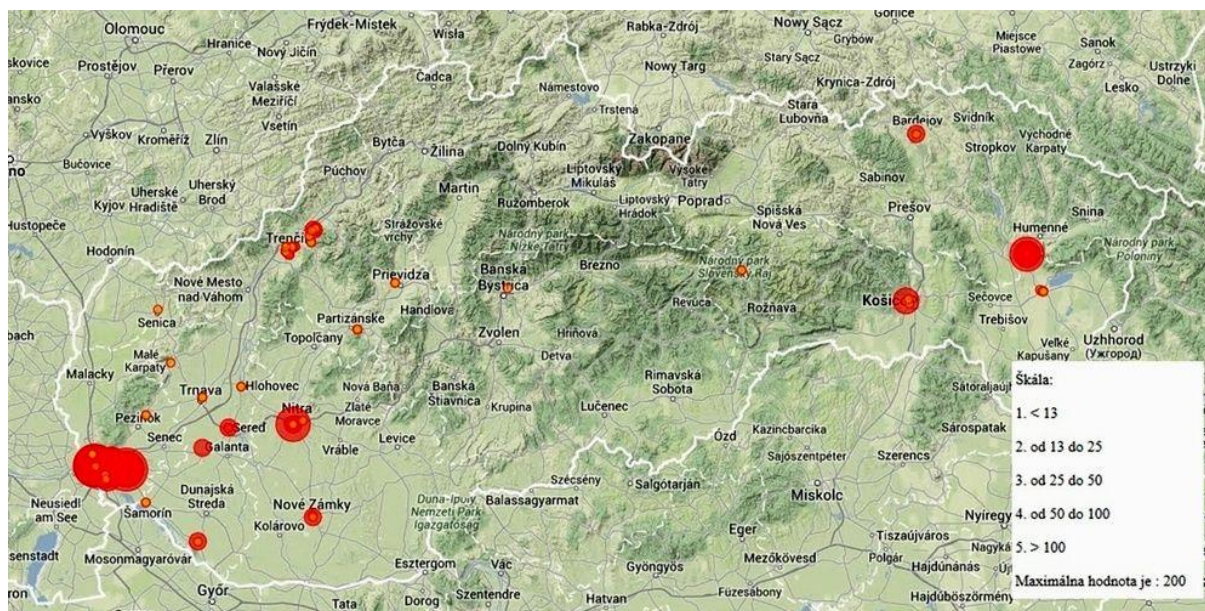


Picture A4-1: Monitoring of ventilation holes in attics with a micro-camera (on the right Common Noctule bat)

Map - distribution of Common Noctule roosting sites in Slovakia



Map - distribution of Pippistrelle bats roosting sites in Slovakia



Distribution of summer breeding colonies of bats in historical buildings in selected regions:

Legend:

- orange – negative localities (no individuals, no guano)
- yellow – guano but no individuals
- red – living individuals

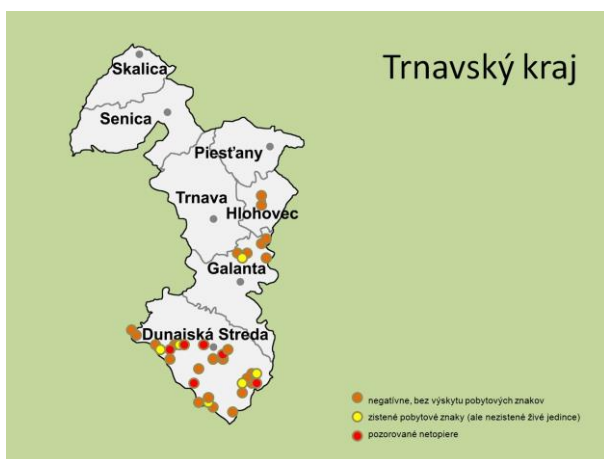
Nitra region



Trenčín region



Trnava region



Žilina region



5.1.5 Action A5: Elaboration of guideline for protection of birds and bats during insulation and reconstruction works in the buildings

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Analysis of implementation of principles on protection of species in buildings (**Annex A5.1**)
Guideline for protection of birds and bats during insulation and reconstruction works in buildings (**Annex A5.2**)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

There are no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Recent progress of the action:

In the preparatory stage of the project in 2011 the representatives of two ministries (the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic) have approved the document named "General principles on protection of species in buildings". These principles have been determined mainly for and applied by the state authorities (e.g. State nature conservancy, nature conservation offices and construction offices). Project staff has been trained on the application of these principles and has been assisting the stakeholders with their proper implementation if required. Our personnel in close cooperation with professional conservationists has also monitored if the principles were applied appropriately.

Based on the field experience gained in 2012, an analysis on implementation of the principles, including recommendations on their improvement has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment. The analysis (Annex A5.1) shows that the main weaknesses of its implementation are: (i) insufficient legal competencies of nature conservation offices towards construction offices; (ii) lack of information about technical conservation measures; and (iii) insufficient capacity to control implementation of the measures. Due to these facts it has happened very often that technical conservation measures are not explicitly included in the official statements of the state authorities. On the other hand if these measures were included in the documentation, the state authorities usually did not have sufficient capacity to control if the measures are applied correctly or at all. There have been several cases that investors or owners rejected installation of special boxes for birds and bats as a compensation measure although it was listed as an obligatory precondition for realization of reconstruction of the respective building. According to the at that time valid legislation nature conservation offices neither State nature conservancy had no tool to force investors to apply the measures. The analysis included also possibilities for improvement of the situation. The most important was incorporation of requirements and rights related to protection of birds and bats in buildings into the amendments to the Law on Nature and Landscape Protection.

Referring to the conclusions of the analysis the project staff in cooperation with external experts was also actively involved in preparation of amendments to the Law on Nature and

Landscape Protection. Huge efforts were given to convince the state authorities to include the principles of protection of species in buildings into this new legislation. Finally we have succeeded to strengthen the position of environmental offices in the process of authorization of construction works, including thermal insulation and reconstruction of buildings. The new legislation has come into force as of the 1st of January 2014. Now the nature conservation offices must be involved in the process of issuing a construction permit and their official statement is obligatory in case that construction works are to be carried out on buildings with confirmed presence of protected species or their habitats. Conservation measures and other requirements included in the statements must be accepted by construction offices and included in the final construction permit as obligatory preconditions. District nature conservation offices should inform the construction offices about occurrence of protected species in buildings that are going to undertake reconstruction or insulation.

These are significant improvements to the legislation that will force all respective authorities and stakeholders to take into account protection of species and habitats on buildings and apply the conservation measures. In the past we faced such serious problems especially because of lack of power and competencies of the state nature conservation authorities and contradictions between respective legal tools on nature conservation and construction. These new developments in the legislation will be appropriately implemented in the final Guideline.

Since beginning of 2013 the project staff has been also actively involved in discussion on new legislation related to building and landscape planning (Construction Law). It is important to incorporate regulations resulting from the nature conservation legislation into the Construction Law and strengthen the position of nature conservation authorities in the whole process.

5.1.6 Action C1: Implementation of practical model measures for protection of Common Swift and other bird species during reconstructions and insulations of buildings

Responsible beneficiary: SOS/BirdLife Slovakia

Deliverables of the action:

Model technical measures for swifts and other birds (e.g. House Martin, Common Kestrel) applied in more than 71 cases (both in regional capitals and other cities).

“Combined” measures focused on both birds and bats implemented on more than 314 sites (in all regional capitals as well as in other cities).

Catalogue of model solutions – e-version (**Annex C1.1**)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule. The overall goal – to apply at least 40 model actions for swifts – has been achieved.

Problems and their solution:

In some cases building managers and owners do not accept preservation of nesting sites of birds on their buildings. In such cases the project staff put efforts to force the stakeholders to support installation of swift boxes on other buildings (e.g. schools) or other constructions (e.g. chimneys) in the vicinity of their building in order to support local populations of swifts.

Recent progress of the action:

Within this action several types of model measures (technical solutions) are reported. These include also the cases, when ordinary types of boxes were installed as a part of model solution. In some other cases specific new types of boxes have been developed within the project that were installed on schools, chimneys, road-bridge and other places (other than prefabs). The “common” types of boxes for swifts that were installed on prefabs are reported within the Action C2, so there is no overlap in reporting the achievements of these two actions (C1 and C2).

In total more than 1 160 buildings were dealt with regarding the protection of birds and bats in 2012 and 2013. Model technical measures for swifts and other birds (e.g. House Martin, Common Kestrel) were applied in more than 71 cases (both in regional capitals and other cities). In addition to that “combined” measures focused on both birds and bats were implemented on more than 314 sites (in all regional capitals as well as in other cities).

The most often implemented technical measures are those to keep ventilation holes in the attic open and accessible for birds also after the insulation and reconstruction of the buildings. This is done through modification of plastic grids that are installed on the openings. Since beginning of the project more than 8 000 modified plastic grids were installed on more than 300 sites (buildings) in Slovakia. It is very efficient and low-cost solution, since the original nesting sites for swifts and roosting sites for bats are preserved.

Specific model measures have included also adjustments of existing nesting sites in empty spaces hidden under building roofs or roofs on balconies, adjustment of construction works to allow birds to continue in feeding young (Swifts, House Martin, Common Kestrel), modification of plastic grids on already reconstructed buildings, installation of specific boxes in attics with aerogel thermal insulation, creation of nesting sites on historical buildings (e.g. castle in Víglaš), etc.

Some of the sites were selected according to the results of swifts monitoring in urban areas in 2012 and 2013. The individual sites for installation of boxes (e.g. chimneys, motorway overpass) were carefully chosen also according to the occurrence of birds and possibility of boxes’ occupancy by birds in a short period. This approach ensures the effectiveness of the measures.

Individual cases of the model protection measures implemented were documented, described in detail and listed in the “Catalogue of model solutions” that has been developed as an internal tool to enable for sharing the relevant experience and know-how within and outside project implementation team (Annex C1.1).

All “dealt with” sites have been recorded in the online database AVES Symphony. The sub-module is accessible only for project staff and includes detailed information on the sites where conservation measures or other intervention of the project personnel have been applied.

Overview on practical model measures implemented in 2012-2013:

| No. | Type of measure | Number of cases | Locality |
|---|--|-----------------|---|
| Conservation measures for birds | | | |
| 1. | nesting holes in castle walls | 1 | Vígľaš (near Zvolen) |
| 2. | boxes installed on road bridge | 1 | Malacky |
| 3. | protection of nesting site in a space under roof | 1 | Košice |
| 4. | boxes installed on schools | 7 | Žilina, Dubnica nad Váhom, Bratislava |
| 5. | replacement of young Common Kestrels | 2 | Košice |
| 6. | installation of special “triangle” boxes | 1 | Dubnica nad Váhom |
| 7. | nest boxes incorporated in blown thermal isolation | 1 | Považská Bystrica |
| 8. | changed timing of construction works | 50+ | whole Slovakia |
| 9. | access to nesting sites in crevices between panels preserved also after the reconstruction of building | 4 | Považská Bystrica, Bratislava |
| 10. | measure to protect birds eggs and young from falling out of nest | 1 | Zvolen |
| 11. | boxes for swifts installed on trees | 1 | Oravská Lesná |
| 12. | re-opening of ventilation shafts in attics by using modified plastic grids | 1 | Veľké Rovne |
| | TOTAL | 71+ | |
| Conservation measures for birds and bats | | | |
| 13. | installation of boxes on stokehold close to existing sites in prefabs | 2 | Rajec, Bratislava |
| 14. | new types of boxes installed on prefabs | 5 | Nitra, Komárno, Brezová pod Bradlom, Bratislava |
| 15. | boxes installed on schools and administrative buildings | 5 | Bratislava, Brvnište |
| 16. | protection of nesting and roosting sites under roof | 2 | Bratislava, Liptovský Mikuláš |
| 17. | installation of 10 500+ modified plastic grids on ventilation shafts in attics | 300+ | whole Slovakia |
| | TOTAL | 314+ | |

Emergency cases were dealt with immediately. For instance transfer of young of Common Kestrel or House Martin that were directly threatened by construction works, saving birds that were stuck in ventilation holes in attics etc. The measures to be applied were chosen by the experienced project staff based on the specific situation and species concerned.

Conservation measures suggested were communicated in advance with the relevant stakeholders, including architects, state authorities, owners and managers of respective buildings.

Relevant costs were covered from the project budget. However, as it was envisaged in the project proposal, due to increasing public awareness and positive attitude of professionals and

public towards protection of birds in urban areas, it was achieved that some of the implemented measures were financially supported by the respective stakeholders.

Since the intensity of thermal insulation and reconstruction works is still high the project staff has focused mainly on solving emergency cases and on the protection of existing nesting sites on buildings. Besides that we have intensively communicated with relevant state authorities as well as with architects in order to include conservation measures already into the stage of preparation of documentation of construction projects. This approach proved to be more effective also in terms of implementation of the principles described in action A5. It also allows investors to include relevant costs into overall budget of the respective construction project.

Another efficient tool that has been widely used were the “expert opinions on protection of birds and bats in buildings” including description of technical and compensation measures to be applied. Such “expert opinions” have been issued by the project staff and external experts. These documents serve the state authorities and architects as an expert basis for elaboration of their official statements and construction projects. In total more than 470 such expert opinions were elaborated in 2012 and 2013. According to the Law on Nature and Landscape Protection that came into force on the 1st of January 2014, the position of nature conservation offices in the process of issuing permission for construction works is now stronger than it was before. Existing legislation should help in securing that appropriate conservation measures aiming to protect birds in buildings will be carried out also after the end of the project.



Picture C1-1: Modified plastic grid



Picture C1-2: Swift boxes installed on road bridge in Malacky (left) and places for installation of boxes created in attics of a school in Žilina (right)



Picture C1-3: Nesting holes on castle in Vígľaš near Zvolen

5.1.7 Action C2: Installation of special nest boxes for Common Swift

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

In total 911 swift boxes were installed on buildings (prefabs, schools) and other constructions (bridge, chimney) in 2012 and 2013 in the course of the project. Through the installation of swift boxes more than 2 812 nesting holes have been created.

First nesting wall for swifts and bats has been created on a house in Revúca with 33 new nesting opportunities for swifts. To attract attention of public a natural motif of swift was painted on the wall with boxes.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

In some cases building managers and owners do not accept installation of swift boxes on their buildings. In such cases the project staff put efforts to force the stakeholders to support installation of swift boxes on other buildings (e.g. schools) or other constructions (e.g. chimneys) in the vicinity of their building in order to support local populations of swifts.

Recent progress of the action:

Although in the original project it was envisaged that boxes would be installed on 16 pilot sites, field experience proved the necessity to apply this conservation measure on a significantly higher number of localities (more than 300). There are technologies used during reconstruction and thermal insulation of buildings that do not allow preserving nesting sites in ventilation holes in attics. In such a situation the only suitable solution is installation of boxes. As mentioned above, installation of boxes was applied on both preliminary selected sites

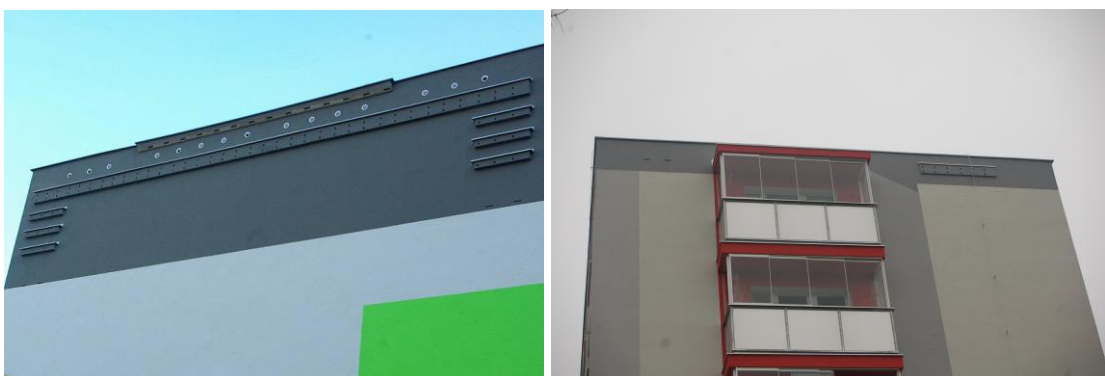
(according to data from monitoring) as well as on ad-hoc identified sites with ongoing or planning construction works.

The special swift boxes have been purchased through public procurement procedure. Project management team was communicating with the suppliers in terms of specific requirements (e.g. material, size, shape, number of nesting holes).

Installation of boxes has been communicated with the stakeholders concerned. The increased communication and awareness rising has resulted in the fact that in many cases investors or owners have purchased some additional boxes from their own financial resources (in total more than 730 nest boxes for swifts). It is assumed that this trend will be increasing in the coming years and will secure sustainability of the project action also after the end of the project lifetime.



Picture C2-1: Nesting wall in Revúca (on the right detail of the Swift silhouette)



Picture C2-2: Swift and bat boxes on buildings with thermal insulation (left – Bratislava, right – Púchov)



Picture C2-3: Boxes for Swifts and House Martin (on the left) and for swifts (on the right)

5.1.7 Action C3: Implementation of practical model measures for the protection of bats during reconstructions and insulations of buildings

Responsible beneficiary: SON

Deliverables of the action:

Model technical measures for bats applied in more than 476 cases (both in regional capitals and other cities).

More than 8000 modified plastic grids installed on more than 300 sites.

“Combined” measures focused on both bats and birds implemented on more than 314 sites (in all regional capitals as well as in other cities) (see Action C1)

Catalogue of model solutions – e-version (**Annex C1.1**)

In total 315 bat boxes installed on buildings and other constructions (stokehold, chimneys, etc.).

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

In some cases building managers and owners do not accept preservation of roosting sites or installation of bat boxes on their buildings. In such cases the project staff put efforts to force the stakeholders to support installation of bat boxes on other buildings (e.g. schools) or other constructions (e.g. chimneys) in the vicinity of their building in order to support local populations of bats. Concerning summer colonies of bats in sacral buildings the project staff and volunteers organize actions to remove guano and clean attics of the buildings. In many cases this is sufficient to convince building owners and managers to accept seasonal presence of bat colonies.

Recent progress of the action:

In 2012-2013 more than 1 060 buildings were dealt with concerning the protection of birds and bats. Catalogue of selected model solutions is in Annex C1.1.

Similarly to Actions C1 and C2, conservation measures for bats were applied on both the preliminary selected localities as well as on ad-hoc localities and in emergency cases, respectively. Some of them were presented to public via media (TV, e-newspapers). For more details see description of D actions.

The complementary source of co-financing for this Action C3 was provided in 2013 by PONTIS Foundation within a project “NETOPIERoviny Rajeckej doliny” that was implemented in Žilina region. It included installation of bat boxes, involvement of volunteers, public awareness activities, publication of postcards, brochure and stickers (see Annexes to this report). This contribution is reported as a co-financing to the LIFE10 Apus & Nyctalus SK project in financial section of this report.

Overview on practical model measures for bats implemented in 2012-2013:

| No. | Type of measure | Number of sites | Location |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| <i>Conservation measures for bats</i> | | | |
| 1. | installation of 315 bat boxes mainly on prefabs | 150+ | whole Slovakia |
| 2. | installation of straight-through-hole bat-boxes | 3+ | Bratislava (including City Hotel in Bratislava) |
| 3. | displacement of bats (10 000+ individuals) from ventilation holes in attics and from crevices between panels | 300+ sites | whole Slovakia |
| 4. | saving bats (100+ individuals) trapped in ventilation and elevator shafts, basements, etc. | 4 | Bratislava, Stropkov, Nitra, Bardejov |
| 5. | cleaning and re-opening of ventilation holes in attics | 1 | Prešov |
| 6. | displacement of bats from ventilation holes of pantries | 1 | Bardejov |
| 7. | installation of boxes on schools | 2 | Bratislava |
| 8. | installation of special grid into ventilation shaft to help bats trapped in ventilation shaft to climb out of the shaft | 1 | Turany pri Martine |
| 9. | protection of timbers in sacral buildings from negative impact of guano | 4 | Nemecká, Rajec, Kamenná Poruba, Višňové |
| 10. | removing of guano from churches and protection of summer colonies of bats on roofs | 8 | Dolná Maríková, Petrovice, Rajec, Fačkov, Višňové, Kanská, Kamenná Poruba, Horný Vadičov |
| 11. | modification of timing of a roof reconstruction in order to protect reproduction colony of bats and measures to keep suitability of the site for bats also after the reconstruction | 1 | Turzovka |
| 12. | adjustment of project documentation and incorporation of conservation measures into construction permit in order to protect a colony of 2400 bats in Elementary School of Art | 1 | Dolný Kubín |
| | TOTAL | 476+ | |

Besides conservation measures for bats also actions aiming both species – bats and birds – were implemented (see description of Action C.1).

Displacement of bats - The most often implemented technical measures are those aiming to safely displace bats from their roosting sites in buildings during the reconstruction works. In the past a high number of bats were killed due to the fact that bats were simply ignored and trapped in their roosting sites with no possibility to escape (construction works are carried out during a day when bats are inactive and resting deep in ventilation holes and other suitable places on buildings). Through the communication with stakeholders and media campaign we have achieved that the project staff and external experts are contacted in advance firstly to check if bats are present in the respective buildings and secondly to carry out appropriate measures to displace bats from the buildings. In 2012-2013 such actions were implemented on more than 300 localities within Slovakia.

Preservation of existing roosting sites - Main effort has been put into preservation of existing roosting sites on buildings. Although in many cases this was not possible due to the applied insulation technologies, the project staff has succeeded in convincing the respective stakeholders to preserve for instance some of the existing crevices between panels accessible for bats. This was achieved through installation of special straight-through-hole boxes that enable bats to use the original roosting sites also after thermal insulation of buildings.

Installation of bat boxes - As a compensation measure for roosting sites between panels and in ventilation openings that could not be preserved after the reconstruction and insulation of buildings, special bat boxes were installed. During the first two years of the project implementation in total 315 bat boxes were installed on prefabs, schools, and other buildings within the frame of the project (relevant costs were covered from the project budget). In addition to that another 832 bat boxes were installed with financial support of investors and other owners. Bat boxes were installed also on the swift nesting wall (see Action C2).

Emergency cases - The project staff also dealt with ad-hoc and emergency cases, such as sudden occurrence of bat colonies in flats, on balconies, bats trapped in ventilation shafts and other narrow spaces in buildings (Common Noctule is a large bat species that is not able to fly out from a deep narrow space such as shafts), etc.

Protection of summer colonies on roofs - Based on the data from the monitoring of summer bat colonies (breeding colonies of females with young) and communication with the respective stakeholders, special activities were carried out to protect these summer colonies of bats, mainly in historical and sacral buildings (churches). In many cases the main problem was not the presence of bats as such (usually they are roosting hidden in lofts and church towers) but the guano which they produce and its negative impact on the old wooden constructions (mainly timber). Over the years the considerable amounts of guano have accumulated on some sites, causing serious problems.

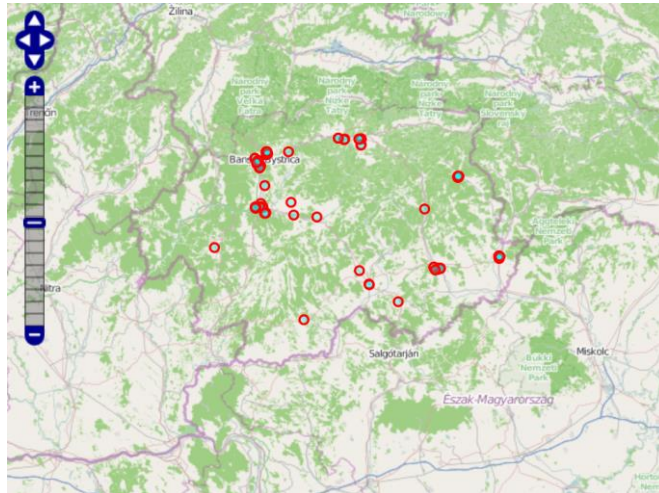
In many cases it was agreed between the project staff and the respective owners and/or managers of the buildings that any actions that may threaten bats and their sites will be consulted with professional zoologists in advance while nature conservationists will regularly clean up guano from the sites. If needed, special measures to protect timbers (especially in old churches) from guano will be applied. So far experience has proved that if these measures are taken the respective owners and managers of buildings in principle accept presence of bats colonies in their buildings.

As the most simple “first aid” measure the guano was removed from churches in several villages (e.g. Višňové, Petrovice, Dolná Maríková, Turzovka, and Fačkov). In Rajec a special wooden construction (additional floor) was built inside the church tower to protect the lower parts of the loft and to make collecting of guano easier. In the church in Nemecká with a large

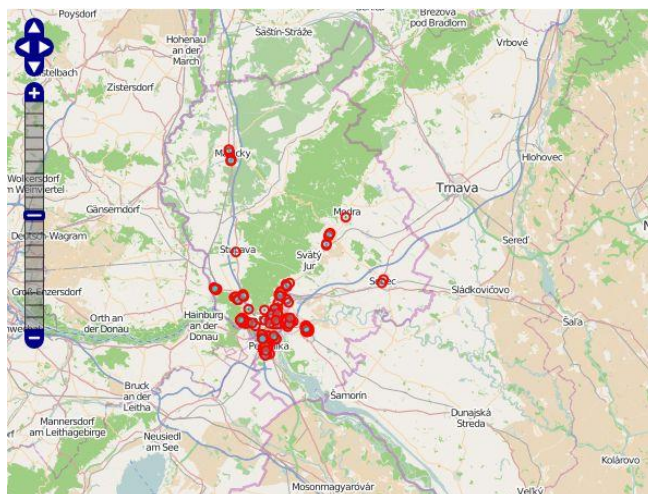
colony of *Myotis myotis* simple covers made from plastic tubes were installed to protect timbers.

The location of “dealt-with” sites within the actions C1, C2 and C3 in each of 8 regions is presented in the following maps:

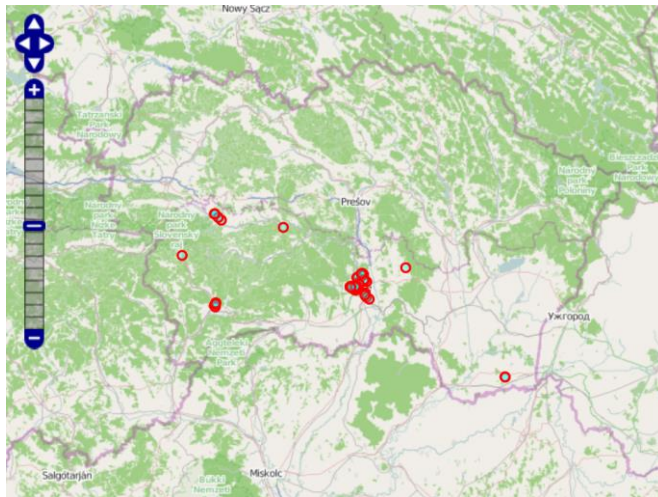
Map C3.2 – Banská Bystrica region



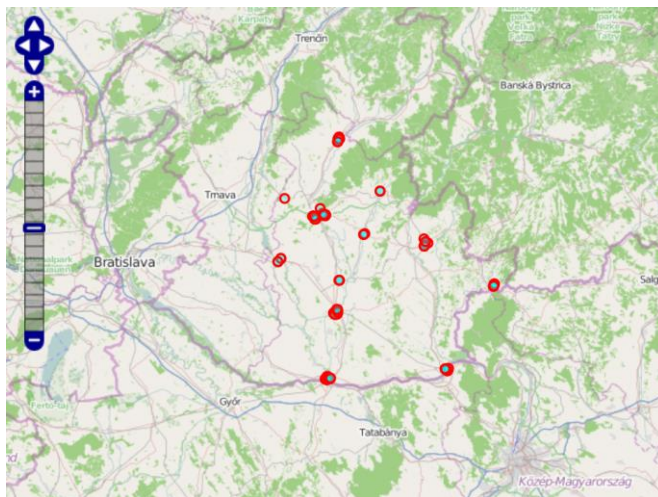
Map C3.1 – Bratislava region



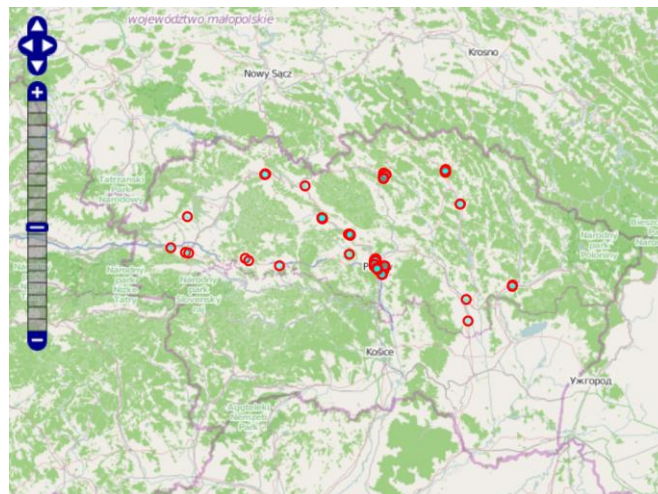
Map C3.8 – Košice region



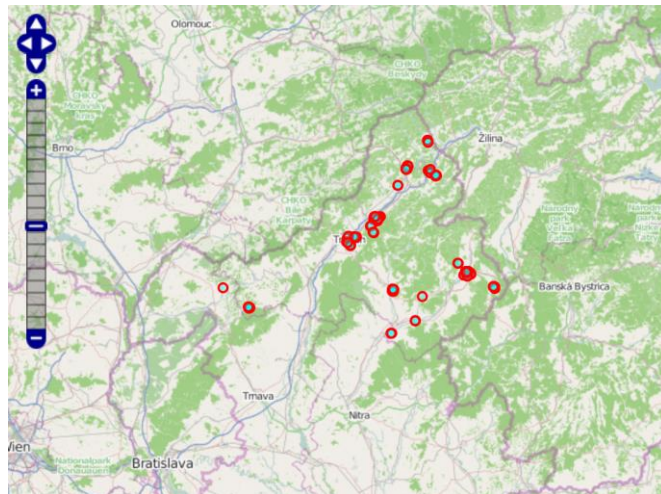
Map C3.4 – Nitra region



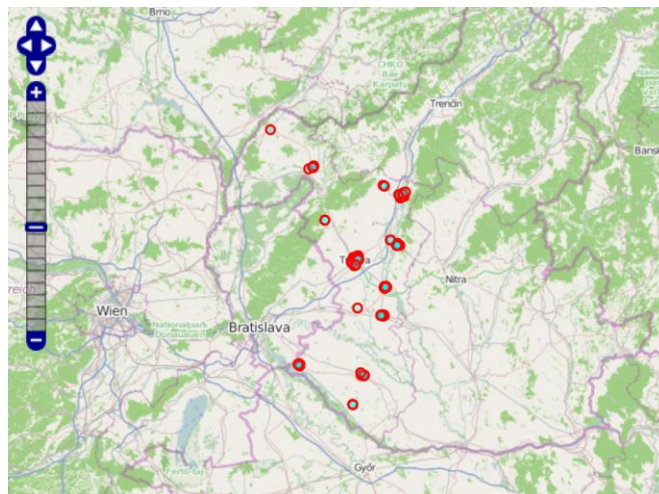
Map C3.7 – Prešov region



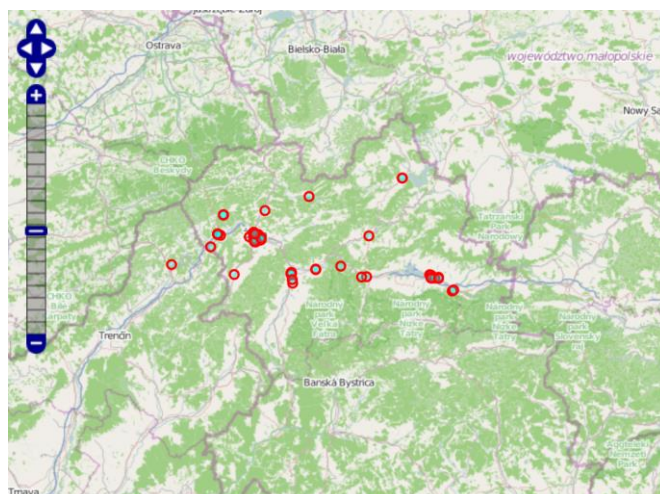
Map C3.5 – Trenčín region



Map C3.3 – Trnava region



Map C3.6 – Žilina region





Picture C3-1: Measures for safe displacing of bats from roosting sites in buildings



Picture C3-2: Bat boxes installed in thermal insulation



Picture C3-3: Emergency cases – bats found trapped on a balcony (left); installed plastic net to help bats to climb out from the bottom a ventilation shaft (right)



Picture C3-4: On the left - Cleaning timbers in church in Rajec; on the right – protecting timbers from guano by installing plastic tubes in church in Nemecká



Picture C3-5: Special straight-through-hole batbox through which bats can access their original roosting sites in the crevices between panels

5.2 Dissemination actions

5.2.1 Objectives

Overview on progress regarding the project's deliverables and milestones:

| Deliverable and Milestones | Associated action | Deadline | Progress / Adjustments |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other species during reconstructions and insulations of buildings | A1 | 31/12/2012 | finished ; Annex A1.1 to mid-term report (28/02/2014) |
| 1 st report from the monitoring | A2, A4 | 30/09/2012 | finished ; Annex A2.1, Annex A4.1 to mid-term report (28/02/2014) |
| 2 nd report from the monitoring | A2, A4 | 30/09/2013 | Common Swift – by 31/04/2014; Common Noctule – by 31/04/2014 |
| 3 rd report from the monitoring | A2, A4 | 30/09/2014 | Common Swift – postponed to 31/01/2015; Common Noctule – postponed to 31/04/2015 |
| 4 th report from the monitoring | A2, A4 | 30/09/2015 | annex to final report |
| Methodology for monitoring of Common Swift in urban areas | A2 | 31/03/2012 | finished ; annex to Inception report (10/2012) |
| National Database of nesting sites of Swifts in Slovakia | A2 | 30/09/2012 | finished ; Annex D1.11 to mid-term report; regularly updated |
| List (database) of building keepers (managers) | A2 | 30/09/2012 | finished ; annex to Inception report (10/2012); regularly updated |
| National Database of roosting sites of bats in Slovakia | A4 | 31/12/2012 | finished ; Annex D1.11 to mid-term report; regularly updated |
| Layman's report | D1 | 31/12/2015 | annex to final report |
| Promotional materials – leaflet, booklet, poster, stickers | D1 | 31/12/2012 | leaflets (Annex D1.1, Annex D1.2), stickers (Annex D1.3) and small calendars (Annex D1.4) attached to mid-term report; other materials will be produced by 31/12/2015 |
| Film (DVD) | D1 | 31/12/2014 | ongoing |
| Media outputs – copies of press releases and articles published | D1 | 31/12/2015 | ongoing (see Annex D1.5 and Annex D1.6) to mid-term report) |

| | | | |
|---|-----|------------|--|
| Technical manual | D1* | 30/06/2013 | finished ; Annex D1.7 to mid-term report (28/02/2014) |
| Guidelines | A5 | 30/11/2015 | ongoing – Annex A5.2 to mid-term report (draft guidelines) |
| Audit report | E2 | 31/12/2015 | annex to final report |
| After-LIFE Communication plan | E3 | 31/12/2015 | annex to final report |
| Reports from the study visits | E4 | 31/12/2015 | 5 study visits finished (see Annex E4.1 and Annex E4.2 to mid-term report) |
| Project manager and financial manager / accountant employed | E1 | 31/01/2012 | finished |
| Other project personnel employed | E1 | 30/09/2012 | finished |
| 32 training seminars organized | A3 | 31/12/2015 | 11 training seminars organized; ongoing |
| At least 40 model actions implemented to ensure Swift protection during reconstruction and insulation works | C1 | 31/12/2015 | applied at more than 71 sites (see Annex C1.1 to mid-term report) |
| 1200 nest boxes for swifts installed | C2 | 31/03/2015 | 911 boxes installed |
| 3 nesting walls prepared | C2 | 31/03/2015 | 1 nesting wall prepared |
| Practical model measures for protection of bats implemented at 40 sites; 400 bat-boxes installed | C3 | 31/12/2015 | model measures applied at more than 476 sites; 315 bat-boxes installed (see Annex C1.1 to mid-term report) |
| Project website established | D1 | 30/06/2012 | finished ; regularly updated |
| Exhibition “Return of Swifts” installed | D1 | 30/11/2013 | exhibition panels designed (see Annex D1.8 to mid-term report); exhibition will be installed by 30/04/2014 |
| Notice boards installed | D1 | 30/04/2013 | notice boards (Annex D1.10) will be produced by 30/06/2014 and installed on buildings by 31/12/2015 |
| 300 meetings with stakeholders organized | D2 | 31/12/2015 | 2443 personal meetings with stakeholders |
| 80 lessons with excursions, 180 lessons for children | D3 | 31/12/2015 | 22 lessons with excursions, 236 lectures for public |
| 1 st thematic national workshop | D4 | 31/12/2012 | finished (Zvolen, 22-23/03/2012) |
| 2 nd thematic national workshop | D4 | 31/12/2013 | finished (Slatinka, 26-27/09/2013) |
| 16 regional meetings | D4 | 31/12/2013 | 8 regional meetings organized, see description of the action D4 in the text below |
| 1 st international meeting | D4 | 31/12/2012 | finished ; international conference in Zvolen (24-26/10/2012) |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|------------|-----------------|
| 2 nd international meeting | D4 | 30/11/2015 | will be on time |
|---------------------------------------|----|------------|-----------------|

* In the project proposal it was mistakenly indicated that this deliverable will be delivered within the Action E1. Technical manual will be delivered only in the frame of the Action D1.

5.2.2 Dissemination: overview per activity

5.2.2.1 Action D1: Promotional materials and project presentation in media

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Information leaflets, 9500 pcs x 2 types (**Annex D1.1, Annex D1.2**)

Stickers, 28000 pcs (**Annex D1.3**)

Small calendars, 250 pcs (**Annex D1.4**)

3 press releases (**Annex D1.6**)

105 media outputs: 77 articles, 21 reports on TV, 6 reports on radio (**Annex D1.5, Annex D1.6**)

Technical manual (**Annex D1.7**)

Web-site of the project available at www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk

Project's Facebook site that can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/navratdazdovnikov>

Design of exhibition "Return of Swifts" (**Annex D1.8**)

Poster "Protection of Swifts and bats in Buildings" (**Annex D1.9**)

Design of notice boards about swifts and bats (**Annex D1.10**)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Although there is a delay in development of promotional materials the public awareness campaign carried out within the project is negatively influenced. Articles in public magazines and newsletters as well as interviews on TV and radio proved to be the most effective tool to increase public awareness on the protection of birds and bats in buildings. On public meetings mainly pictures and power-point presentations were used. If possible living animals – bats and swifts – were shown to public as well. Keeping in mind that public has a natural antipathy towards bats, the possibility to see and even touch a living specimen is very good "ice-breaking" tool.

Problems and their solution:

There has been unexpected problem with presenting the project and logo of the LIFE program in media. Such a presentation is considered as a hidden advertisement and media are charging it according to their internal rules. Very often the logo is intentionally deleted from the spot or printed article. The project management team is not in the position to change these publishing rules. However, we do our best to present the project, LIFE program and EC as often as possible. Using relevant logos is obligatory at actions organized by the partners within the project.

Recent progress of the action:

Several types of promotional materials have been elaborated and disseminated to stakeholders:

Information leaflets (in Slovak) *S netopiermi pod jednou strechou / Under one roof with bats* (9500 pcs) and *Dážďovník obyčajný / Common Swift* (9500 pcs) have been published and disseminated to public. English version (approximately 1000 pcs) will be prepared in 2014. Both leaflets are attached to this report (Annex D1.1 and Annex D1.2).

Stickers with Common Swift (Annex D1.3) were produced by SOS/BirdLife Slovakia (28 000 pcs). Respective costs were covered from additional financial sources that are reported as co-financing to this project.

Small calendars with pictures of Common Swift and Common Noctule (Annex D1.4) were produced in 2013 by BROZ (250 pcs). LIFE logo and reference to the project are clearly visible on these materials.

These promotional materials have been disseminated on meetings, seminars and lectures in schools and also on public awareness events organized and/or attended by the project's beneficiaries.

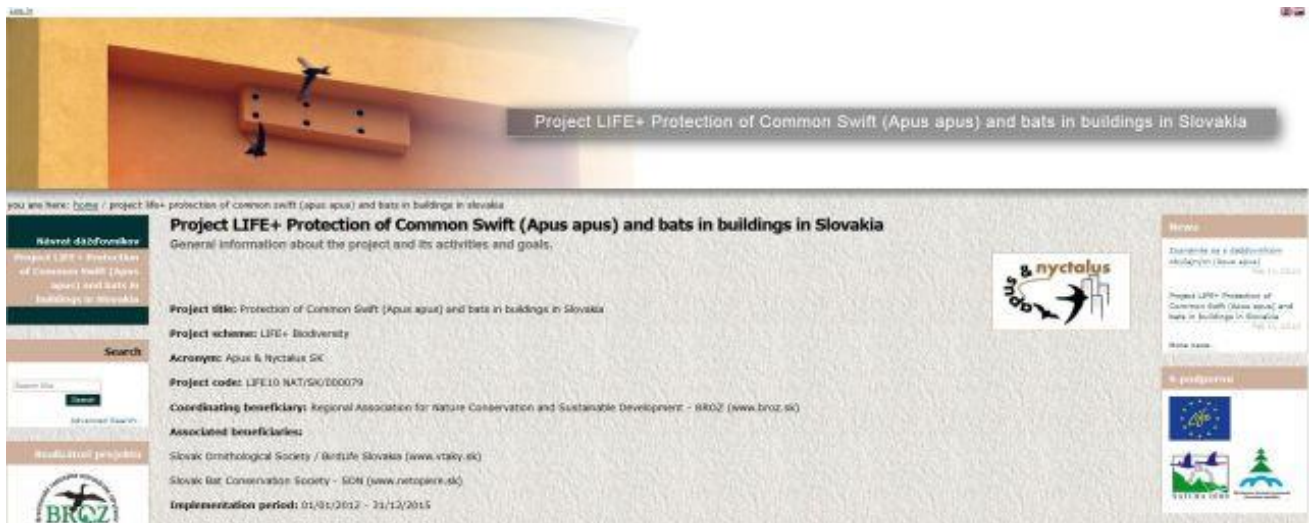
In the course of the project 3 **press conferences** were organized (15/05/2012, 25/10/2012 and 09/05/2013). Two of them took place in Bratislava in order to attract as many media representatives as possible. The press conferences were held in May back-to-back with celebration of *World day of migratory birds*. A press conference to inform about the international conference was organized in October 2012 in Zvolen. Invitation to the events was disseminated via media mailing lists of the project's beneficiaries. Project was presented through more than 105 media outputs out of which 77 were articles in e-newsletters, magazines and other printed media, 21 reports on TV, and 6 reports on radio. List of media outputs (press cuttings overview) (Annex D1.5) and the copies of articles and press releases (Annex D1.6) are attached.

In this regard it has to be pointed out that many media people have considered LIFE logo or even reference to the project and mentioning financial support from the Commission as an advertisement. Publishing LIFE logo and mentioning the Commission as the project donor is conditioned by extra payment of advertisement fee that is at least 30 EUR per article. When providing an interview the project staff has always mentioned the support from the Commission. However, this information is often missing in the final reportage. Unfortunately, there is no simple way for the project staff to influence this situation concerning media.

A **technical manual** containing detailed description on technical measures for birds and bats in buildings was elaborated. This is mainly intended for stakeholders, in particular the construction companies, architects, field workers and building managers. It includes also information on suitability of the respective measures as well as the main threats to the species and habitats that can result from inappropriate application of the measures. Electronic version is attached to this report (Annex D1.7); printed version will be produced and disseminated in 2014.

The **project web site** was established during the Inception phase and is available at www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk. It is regularly updated and basic information about the project are available in Slovak and English (English version is recently under construction). Slovak version is up-to-date and includes photo gallery, information on the project, its activities and results, on events related to the topic and also contacts on the project personnel and regional coordinators in case of emergency. Detailed information about conservation measures,

legislation and best-practice examples from Slovakia and other European countries can be found there as well. Part of the web site (INTRANET) is accessible only for the project staff. It serves as a tool for communication and sharing draft documents, documents for the reporting etc.



Recently one of the most popular social internet tools is Facebook. Special FB site for the project and conservation of species in buildings in general was established; can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/navratdazdovnikov>.



Exhibition on the project has been prepared. There are 6 pull-ups with information about the species, their habitats and threats. Design of exhibition panels is in Annex D1.8. Different types of boxes for swifts and bats will be installed on a special panel in a way that will allow visitors to see the inside structure of boxes. In addition to that a model of a prefab will be developed to demonstrate places such as ventilation shafts in attics, holes between panels, cracks etc. used by birds and bats for nesting and roosting. Likely the exhibition will be displayed at the Ministry of Environment in 2014 and will be available to all interested parties (schools, museums, public libraries, etc.). Production of a short documentary **film** (ca 25 minutes) has started since 2013 and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2014. Scenario has been written and intensive shooting was done in 2013, in particular during the nesting season of Swifts. In 2013 a **competition** for young designers was organized. All young designers from Slovakia were free to submit designs with bats or swifts and with reference to the project to the jury. The best designs will be used for promotional materials. **Posters** promoting protection of birds and bats in cities (Annex D1.9) were designed and will be disseminated to the public. Simple **notice boards** on the project (Annex D1.10) have been developed, informing about the compensation measures for protection of birds and bats and about the support of the Commission to the project. The notice boards were installed on the respective buildings (dealt-with sites).

5.2.2.2 Action D2: Meetings with stakeholders

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

2 443 informal personal meetings (**Annex D2.1**)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

There are no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Recent progress of the action:

Meetings with stakeholders usually take place on the spot when dealing with an individual conservation activities. Results and agreements achieved during the meetings are recorded in so-called construction diary and signed by all parties. This is by law an obligatory tool to record all important issues related to the respective construction activity and to state authorities it serves as an official document. The project staff is recording all buildings with ongoing insulation or reconstruction in the respective regions. These localities are regularly checked and if necessary, conservation measures to minimize direct threats to the species are discussed and applied in cooperation with the respective stakeholders.

There are many localities with construction permission issued not later than in 2011. These cases require intensive communication and cooperation between the project staff, owners, buildings managers, construction companies and relevant state authorities because the respective permissions do not include measures related to species protection. Since the beginning of the project in 2012 big efforts has been given to secure that protection of birds and bats in buildings is taken into account during elaboration of construction projects and related documents, including statements and permissions issued by the state authorities (nature conservation and construction offices). In this regard the project staff has been gathering information and data on planned construction works to be carried out on buildings with existing as well as with potential nesting and roosting sites of birds and bats.

In total 2 443 informal personal meetings (on average 3 participants per meeting) were undertaken over the last two years to improve the cooperation with stakeholders and to raise their awareness on the topic. This relatively high number reflects the fact that for each case (dealt-with site) usually several personal meetings is necessary. Lists of participants are available only for those close-to-official meetings with presence of representatives of several stakeholders that dealt with complicated issues (Annex D2.1).

There has been established a cooperation with SNC in regard to the species protection in urban areas. It was preliminary agreed that in 2014 the project staff will train professional zoologists and rangers from SNC on the conservation measures for protection of species in buildings. Concerning protection of summer roosting sites and colonies of bats an intensive communication with representatives of churches, most importantly with the Bishops' Conference of Slovakia have been established. Cooperation with the University in Žilina is foreseen to start in 2014 on the issue. Main focus will be given to the problems related to negative impact of bat's guano on timbers in roofs with summer roosting colonies of bats that is very often the main argument when dealing with presence of bats (in many cases there are hundreds to thousands individuals) in sacral and historical buildings.





Picture D2-1: On-the-spot meetings and discussions with stakeholders

5.2.2.3 Action D3: Excursions in cities and lectures on schools

Responsible beneficiary: SON

Deliverables of the action:

236 lectures at schools etc. for more than 1500 people

22 outdoor lectures including excursions for more than 120 people

(Annex D3.1)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

There are no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Recent progress of the action:

To raise awareness of local public on protection of birds and bats in buildings in total 236 lectures were held on schools, in public libraries, so-called summer outdoor schools and other places for more than 1500 people, including students and pre-school kids. The list of all events and the respective lists of participants are in Annex D3.1.

Another 22 outdoor lectures including excursions to the project sites, important summer roosting sites of bats etc. were organized. Within these excursions more than 120 people took part in the field research of bats including the netting (catching bats into a special net) and they could see these species in details. Outdoor lectures were organized also along with the European Bat Nights actions in cooperation with EUROBATs. To present some of the field research methods such as netting of bats, some of the presentations were organized also

outside urbanized areas (e.g. in the Pieniny National Park), near water bodies where the bats could be better observed in summer.

In cooperation with the State Forests of the High Tatras Mts. National Park, state enterprise, educational materials about bats, their ecology, conservation and role in ecosystems were elaborated. These materials have been used as a tool for lectures. Lectures were given to the State Forests staff as well to improve the knowledge on the topic and enable them to pass lessons learned to a wider audience. Cooperation with several Eco-centres (e.g. Eco-center in Zázrivá) has been established and the project staff has used this opportunity to give lectures on protection of birds and bats.



Picture D3-1: Lecture for students in Nové Zámky (left) and outdoor excursion in Rajec (right)



Picture D3-2: European Bat Night in Prešov (left) and Rajec (right)

5.2.2.4 Action D4: Workshops, national and international meetings for experts and stakeholders

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

2 thematic national workshops attended by 57 participants

8 regional meetings attended by 102 participants

1 international conference attended by 120 participants from Slovakia and abroad

(Annex D4.1)

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

According to the project proposal 16 regional meetings with stakeholders were foreseen to be held by the end of 2013. As explained under the Action A3 and Action D2, most of the communication with the stakeholders usually has taken place on the spot during the individual meetings. Generally the personal meetings on the spot have been more preferred by the stakeholders since they use to be very busy particularly during the “construction season” (since spring to autumn) to participate on the “official” regional meetings. We have realized that on-the-spot personal meetings serve better the purpose to actively involve stakeholders into conservation actions. Thus for the next period of the project implementation we would suggest to keep the agenda of the next regional meetings on the presentation of the project progress and sharing the newest knowledge and experience on specific conservation issues. In the same time the communication with and involvement of the stakeholders should be further continued mainly via the personal, informal meetings, that would be held more frequently and with less participants.

Recent progress of the action:

In 2012 and 2013 in total **2 thematic national workshops** attended by 57 participants (project staff, representatives of SNC, students and volunteers) were organized: 22-23 March 2012 in Zvolen, and 26-27 September 2013 in Slatinka. The results of the project actions were presented by the regional coordinators. These meetings have served as a platform to present overall project progress as well as regional and local activities and share knowledge and experience on dealing with specific conservation issues. In addition to that **8 regional meetings** for the project staff and stakeholders (102 participants) were held in Bratislava, Košice, Nitra, Ďurčiná and Zvolen. Part of the agenda of 3 meetings organized in 2013 (in Nitra, Považská Bystrica, Ďurčiná and Zvolen) was to train the project team and volunteers on monitoring of bats by using bat-detectors as well as on how to process the obtained data by using special software. These workshops and meetings proved to be very useful for improvement of the expertise of the project team as well as volunteers.

The complementary source of co-financing for this Action D4 was provided in 2013 by PONTIS Foundation within a project “NETOPIERoviny Rajeckej doliny” that was implemented in Žilina region. It included installation of bat boxes, involvement of volunteers,

public awareness activities, publication of postcards, brochure and stickers (see Annexes to this report). This contribution is reported as a co-financing to the LIFE10 Apus & Nyctalus SK project in financial section of this report.

On 24-26 October 2012 the **1st International Conference Conservation of Birds and Bats during insulation and reconstruction of buildings** was held in Zvolen. 120 experts representing state authorities, universities and expert NGOs from Slovakia, Spain, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, and Ukraine presented their experience and know-how on conservation of birds and bats in buildings. The conference was organized under the auspices of the Minister of Environment of the Slovak Republic. On the second day of the conference a field visit to the project sites in Zvolen was organized. The conference was the first international event focusing in particular on conservation of bats and birds in buildings held in the region of Central Europe. The second international conference is foreseen in the second half of 2015 and we expect even higher interest of experts and stakeholders from Slovakia and other European countries to share experience on this topic.

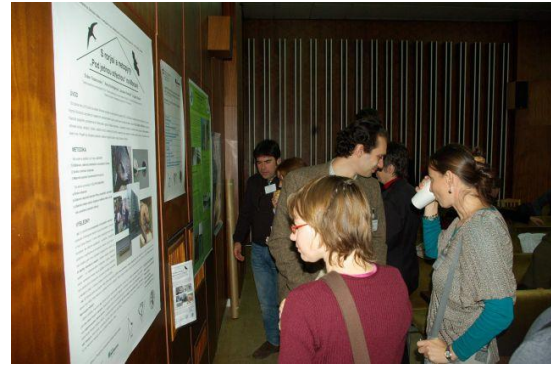
Events organized in 2012 and 2013:

| Event | Date | Place | Number of participants |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 st National workshop | 22-23/03/2012 | Zvolen | 38 |
| 2 nd National workshop | 26-27/09/2013 | Slatinka pri Zvolene | 19 |
| 1 st Regional meeting | 25-26/02/2012 | Bratislava | 10 |
| 2 nd Regional meeting | 05/03/2012 | Košice | 8 |
| 3 rd Regional meeting | 24/10/2012 | Zvolen | 16 |
| 4 th Regional meeting | 29/11 – 01/12/2012 | Bratislava | 21 |
| 5 th Regional meeting | 20/03/2013 | Nitra | 13 |
| 6 th Regional meeting | 27/05/2013 | Považská Bystrica | 6 |
| 7 th Regional meeting | 21-22/06/2013 | Ďurčiná | 18 |
| 8 th Regional meeting | 18/10/2013 | Zvolen | 10 |
| 1 st International conference | 24-26/10/2012 | Zvolen | 120 |
| | | | Total: 279 |

The respective lists of participants for each event are attached to this report (Annex D4.1).



Picture D4-1: National workshop in Slatinka (left) and training on monitoring of bats with bat-detectors (Ďurčiná)



Picture D4-2: International Conference (24-26/10/2012, Zvolen)

5.2.2.5 Action E4: Networking with other projects

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

5 study tours with total 86 person days (**Annex E4.1, Annex E4.2**)
networking with 11 projects

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:
Action is implemented according to the project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

There are no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Recent progress of the action:

Although this action is not included among D actions (public awareness and dissemination of results) it can be considered as an activity to both improve cooperation and disseminate the lessons learned. Several short study visits / trips have been accomplished. The main focus was on exchange of information and know-how, best practices and experience sharing. During the visits the project activities, particularly the conservation measures taken and their achievements were also presented to the wider audience at several national and international meetings and conferences. The results of this action are summarised in the table below.

List of study tours organized in the frame of the project:

| No. | Place | Date | Agenda | Number of participants | Duration (days) | Total person days |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Berlin (Germany) | 10-12/04/2012 | International workshop on Common Swift - biology, ecology and conservation of swifts in European and non-European countries | 5 | 4 | 20 |
| 2. | Barcelona (Spain) | 05-07/12/2012 | Ecology and monitoring of bats | 3 | 5 | 15 |
| 3. | Krynica-Zdrój (Poland) | 22-24/03/2013 | protection of bats | 2 | 4 | 12 |
| 4. | Slovakia | 04-05/07/2013 | excursion to sites with implemented conservation measures for birds and bats organized for colleagues from Poland; excursion was organized on demand of experts from Poland | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| 5. | Czech Republic (Olomouc, Přerov, ...) | 20-22/05/2013 | excursion to sites with implemented conservation measures for birds and bats | 8 | 3 | 24 |
| | | | | | | 86 |

Particularly important was the study tour to the Czech Republic (20-22 May 2013) that was organized in the frame of the project. It was organized in cooperation with the Czech Ornithological Society and Czech Bat Conservation Society and attended by 8 members of the project team. During the study tour several sites with implemented conservation measures, including boxes for swifts and bats were visited in Přerov, Holešov, Olomouc, and Uherské Hradiště. In Velká Bystřice a church with important colonies of bats was visited. It was best-practice example on cooperation between conservationists and stakeholders, in this case church representatives. Colleagues from the Czech Republic presented their projects and activities on species protection in buildings during meetings at Ornithological station in Přerov. Colleagues from the Czech Republic have run several national and regional projects on birds and bats conservation in buildings. They have gained valuable expertise which application in Slovakia requires only small modifications since the relevant legislation, structure of state authorities and at last but not least also public awareness and attitude toward the topic is very similar in both countries. More detailed report from the study tour is attached to this report (Annex E4.1). All respective documents from the other study visits (invitations, programs, reports, etc.) are attached to this report (Annex E4.2).

The project was presented by SON also at the meetings of Advisory Committee of EUROBATS held on 15-17 April 2012 in Dublin, Ireland and on 15-17 April 2013 on Sofia, Bulgaria. Based on our intervention a special expert group on protection of bats in buildings was established within the Advisory Committee. The group has members from 12 European countries and its 1st meeting was held in Sofia in 2013.

Besides that the project and its preliminary outcomes were presented at conferences in the Czech Republic (Zoologické dny 2012) and Slovakia (Zoológia 2012 in Zvolen, Výskum a ochrana cicavcov na Slovensku, 08 November 2013 in Zvolen). Conservation measures were presented to representatives of companies dealing with thermal insulation technologies and other experts at international conference on complex reconstruction of flat-buildings held in Podbanské on 20-22 November 2012. This event provided a good opportunity to meet all important stakeholders from Slovakia and discuss about species-friendly technologies applied abroad.

Participation of project staff at these events has provided a platform for establishing contacts with colleagues from other countries, to share knowledge and best-practice examples.

In total the contacts have been established with 11 other projects on relevant topics.

| No. | Project / Initiative | Country |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Swift arrival project | worldwide |
| 2. | Initiative "Swift Conservation" and its projects | U.K. |
| 3. | NETOPIERoviny Rajeckej doliny | Slovakia |
| 4. | "Pod jednou střeou" ("Under one roof") | Czech Republic |
| 5. | "Náš soused je netopýr" ("Our neighbour is bat") | Czech Republic |
| 6. | Monitoring of bats in prefabs | Czech Republic |
| 7. | Protection of bats roosting in buildings | Czech Republic |
| 8. | Initiative of Bat Conservation Trust focused on protection of bats in buildings (<i>Buildings, Planning and Development</i>) | U.K. |
| 9. | "Poznej tajemný svět netopýrů" (educational program on bats for schools) | Czech Republic |
| 10. | Enhancing business and biodiversity cooperation in the Visegrád countries for the benefit of all | CEEweb for Biodiversity (Hungary), Poland, Czech Republic |
| 11. | Initiative on protection of Swifts (e.g. action <i>Jerusalem welcomes swifts to the Western Wall</i>) | Israel |

Based on these contacts cooperation with NGO Ptaki Polskie (Polish Birds) from Poland has been established and elaboration of a potential joint project on the swift conservation is recently being discussed. Contacts and cooperation based on the identical goals has been established with several organizations and experts from European and non-European countries (Bat Conservation Trust - U.K., Royal Society for Protection of Birds – U.K., Swifts International, Czech Ornithological Society, Czech Bat Conservation Society, Ptaki Polskie – Poland, other experts from Spain, Israel, etc.)



Picture E4-1: Participants at international workshop on Common Swift in Berlin (10-12/04/2012)



Picture E4-2: Study tour to the Czech Republic, 20-22 May 2013 (on the left: a wall with different types of swift boxes, Ornithological Station in Přerov)

5.3 Evaluation of Project Implementation

The results of the action conducted have been in principle as anticipated in the project (see description of the actions). Choosing of appropriate methodologies for the project has been confirmed by so far achieved results.

The applied methodologies can be divided into the following groups:

- methodology for overall project management;
- methodology for accounting;
- methodology for monitoring of swifts and bats and elaboration of reports from the monitoring;
- methodology for implementation of conservation measures; and
- methodology for organizing trainings and workshops, PR and media activities

During the project implementation an attention has been paid to the cost-efficiency of the project's actions. Public procurement procedures following legal requirements have been applied concerning works and services provided by external providers. Appropriate higher standards than required by legislation were applied. The cost-efficiency of the project's

actions has been reached also through a systematic approach to the project management, including efficient use of the project staff's work time, vehicles and other resources.

| Task | Foreseen in the revised proposal | Achieved | Evaluation |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| A1 | Elaboration of Methodology for protection of Common Swift, bats and other species during the reconstructions and insulations of buildings | yes (Annex A1.1) | Methodology has been based on the field experience and as such has been implemented concerning dealt-with sites |
| A2 | Elaboration of Methodology for monitoring of Common Swift in urban areas | yes (attached to the Inception report) | applied during monitoring in 2012 and 2013 |
| A2 | National database of nesting sites of Swifts | yes | accessible on-line (AVES Symphony) for the project staff and public; regularly updated |
| A2 | List of building keepers (managers) | yes | incorporated in the on-line database AVES Symphony; regularly updated |
| A2 | Report from monitoring of Common Swift in 2012 | yes (Annex A2.1) | delivered with delay due to unforeseen factors (see description of the action) |
| A3 | 32 trainings, at least 160 participants | 12 trainings, 278 participants | stakeholders prefer on-the-spot personal meetings when dealing with a concrete conservation issue; so far 2 440+ such meetings have been held (see description of Action D2) |
| A3 | at least 160 trained on the conservation measures for Swifts and bats | yes - 278 stakeholders trained | |
| A4 | National database of roosting sites of bats in buildings | yes | accessible on-line (AVES Symphony) for the project staff and public; regularly updated |
| A4 | Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in 2012-2013 | yes (Annex A4.1) | delivered with delay due to unforeseen factors (see description of the action) |
| A5 | Elaboration of Guideline for protection of birds and bats during insulation and reconstruction of buildings and its approval by the competent state authority | draft Guideline in Annex A5.1 | draft Guideline elaborated; next step is to modify it according to the modified Law on the Nature Conservation that came into force as of 01/01/2014 |
| C1 | at least 40 model actions for protection of Swift applied | model actions applied at more than 71 sites (Annex C1.1) | |
| C2 | at least 1200 boxes for Swifts installed | 911 boxes installed | |
| C2 | 3 nesting walls installed | 1 nesting wall installed | |
| C2 | increased population of Common Swift by approx. 20% on 16 sites | NA | will be evaluated in the final report |
| C3 | practical model measures for bats applied at least at 40 sites | model measures applied at more than 476 sites (Annex C1.1) | |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|---|
| C3 | at least 400 boxes for bats installed | 315 boxes installed | |
| C3 | stable size of populations of Common Noctule bats at 16 sites | NA | will be evaluated in the final report |
| D1 | Layman's report (1000 copies) | NA | will be delivered with the final report |
| D1 | project's website | yes | www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk ; regularly updated; English version under construction |
| D1 | leaflets (20 000 copies) | 19000 pcs in Slovak printed and disseminated | by the end of the project 1000 pcs of leaflets in English will be elaborated and disseminated |
| D1 | booklet (2000 copies) | ongoing | |
| D1 | posters (1000 copies) | see Annex D1.1 | |
| D1 | stickers (4000 copies) | yes - 28 000 pcs of stickers printed and disseminated | |
| D1 | film | scenario and shooting is almost finished, final processing is ongoing | final film will be delivered by the end of 2014 |
| D1 | technical manual (1000 copies) | e-version is finished (Annex D1.1) | technical manual will be printed and disseminated by the end of June 2014 |
| D1 | press releases (4), articles (20), reports and interviews on radio (5) and TV (4) | see the list of media outputs in Annex D1.5 | there have been unforeseen complications regarding using the LIFE+ logo and project title in media outputs (see description of Action D1); press releases 3; articles 77; reports and interviews on radio 6 and TV 21 |
| D1 | exhibition "Return of Swifts" installed at 8 locations | design of the exhibition is in Annex D1.1 | first public presentation of the exhibition will be performed by the end of June 2014 |
| D1 | notice boards (10 pieces) | design of the notice board is in Annex D1.1; notice boards have been installed on dealt-with sites | notice boards will be installed on other dealt-with sites |
| D2 | at least 300 meetings organized with at least 3 participants per meeting | yes - 2443 meetings with 3 participants per meeting (on average) | on-the-spot personal meetings proved to be very useful when dealing with a concrete conservation issue |
| D3 | 80 lessons with excursions with at least 15 participants per meeting | 22 outdoor excursions for more than 120 participants organized | outdoor excursions were organized also back-to-back with lectures and also within the European Bat Nights |
| D3 | 180 lessons for children with at least 20 participants per meeting | 236 lectures for more than 1500 participants | lectures were held at schools, public libraries, museums etc. |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|---|
| | | (mostly school kids) organized | |
| D4 | 2 thematic workshops for at least 25 participants per workshop | yes - 2 workshops organized, 57 participants | national workshops held on: 22-23/03/2012 in Zvolen, and 26-27/09/2013 in Slatinka |
| D4 | 16 regional meeting for stakeholders with at least 20 participants | 8 regional meetings organized, 102 participants | regional meetings held in Bratislava, Košice, Zvolen, Nitra, Považská Bystrica, and Ďurčiná |
| D4 | 2 international meetings | 1 international conference with 120 participants | successful international conference held in October 2012 |
| E2 | External audit | NA | will be undertaken at the end of the project |
| E3 | After-LIFE Communication Plan | NA | will be delivered by the end of the project |
| | | | |
| E4 | 8 study tours (20 person days per visit, total 160 person days) | 5 study tours organized, 23 participants, total 86 person days | study tours proved to be very useful in order to exchange information and experience with colleagues from other countries |
| E4 | contacts established with at least 4 projects | yes - contacts established with 11 projects | contacts have been established via personal meetings at study tours and conferences and also via e-mail |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Immediately visible project results:

- Results of the monitoring of Swifts and bats in buildings in urban areas (Action A2, Action A4);
- Implementation of conservation measures on protection of existing nesting and roosting sites, in particular in ventilation shafts in attics (Action C1, Action C3). Bats and Swifts do return in the roosting and nesting sites they occupied during the previous season. If appropriate measures to preserve the sites are taken, birds and bats usually occupy them also in the next season.
- Media campaign, workshops for stakeholders, lectures for schools and public (Actions A3, D1, D2, and D3) have resulted in increasing public awareness on protection of birds and bats in buildings. Public is actively asking for help and do require preserving existing nesting and roosting sites also after the construction works. There is increasing number of conservation issues that are dealt with already during the stage of elaboration and planning of construction projects.
- Organizing the international conference (Action D4) has immediately led to new contacts with conservationists and experts from other European as well as non-European countries and exchange of know-how. These new information have been applied especially during the implementation of C actions.

Project results that become apparent after a certain time period:

- Effectiveness of the implemented compensation measures such as installation of boxes for birds and bats (Action C2, Action C3) will be evaluated after a certain period of time. Birds and bats prefer nesting and roosting sites situated on not yet insulated and/or reconstructed buildings. As soon as there is a lack of such sites the animals will shift to sites created through the installation of boxes. The shifting towards boxes is a step-by-step process. This fact has been proved by experience from e.g. Czech Republic and Germany where installation of boxes for swifts and bats have been ongoing for several years longer than in Slovakia.
- To assess effectiveness and fruitfulness of implementation of the *Guideline on protection of birds and bats in buildings* (Action A5) will be possible only after its official approval by the relevant state authority and at least 1 year of its implementation in the field. So far experience regarding application of principles on protection of birds and bats in buildings show that such an official document is a key tool in advocating the need of incorporating the appropriate conservation measures into the planning documentation as well as final construction permits.

In 2013 the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic has officially confirmed its financial contribution to the project's implementation. In this regard an amendment to the Grant Agreement has been elaborated and signed by the European Commission and the Coordinating Beneficiary (BROZ) in January 2014. This amendment has not significantly influenced the project's implementation in 2012 and 2013.

5.4 Analysis of long-term benefits

The LIFE project aims to bring direct conservation benefits to the target species through protection and improvement of quality of their habitats and thus to improve their conservation status according to the Birds and Habitats Directives. Lessons learnt have been implemented into the new *Law on Nature and Landscape Protection* that came into force as of the 1st of January 2014 as well as into the "*Guideline on protection of birds and bats during insulation and reconstruction works in buildings*" that was developed in the course of the project. It is foreseen that the Guideline will be approved by a competent authority by the end of the project.

The project's actions contribute also into the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and 7th EU Environment Action Program, in particular to the following priority objectives:

Priority 1: Natural capital

Priority 5: Increased information

Priority 6: Secured investments

Priority 8: Sustainable cities

1. Long-term benefits and sustainability

Preliminary project's results achieved during the first two years of the project implementation can be considered as sustainable. Applied conservation measures and preserved nesting and roosting sites for the species on the already reconstructed buildings and/or on buildings with thermal insulation will serve their purpose and support populations of the species for long-term. Furthermore the sustainability of the project achievements will be safeguarded also

through the approval and implementation of the Guideline on protection of birds and bats in buildings and through implementation of the respective legislation, in particular the Law on Nature and Landscape Protection which include articles related to the topic. Based on these documents conservation measures should be further financed by investors and/or owners of the buildings. Protection of summer colonies of bats in sacral buildings should be supported also by the relevant churches and state authorities as a part of the national cultural / natural heritage.

Implementation of low-cost measures (see description in actions C) can lead to the cost-efficiency and long-term cost savings. Populations of swifts and bats play a key role in urban ecosystems as a biological shield against tiresome insects. Particularly the population in the cities located near larger rivers (e.g. Bratislava on the Danube River) that are facing infestations of mosquitoes after flooding can significantly benefit from presence of the species.

The project did not directly address any substantial long-term economic and social benefits such as positive effects on employment, health, ethnic integration, equality or other socio-economic impacts. However, implementation of conservation measures has created demand for manufacturing of special boxes for birds and bats and for their installation, as well as for the implementation of other kinds of conservation measures. To some extent this can be considered as a positive effect on employment at a local or regional level. The project itself has created 25 new jobs out of which 13 are full-time jobs. Other new jobs are rising based on the demand for services, expertise, implementation of conservation measures etc.

Recent trends concerning reconstruction and insulation of buildings are likely to continue in the following years. Preliminary project's results indicate that cooperation among investors, experts and project's beneficiaries will be needed also after the end of the project. The beneficiaries do have sufficient personal capacities to carry on the implementation of the conservation measures and providing expert assistance as long as needed.

The LIFE project contributes to the common EU goals in several various ways:

The national populations of the target species – Common Swift (*Apus apus*) and Common Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) – are regularly migrating over large distances, being actually part of the larger “pan-European” and global populations. Therefore the EU added value of the project and its actions is also in the fact that the project brings excellent contribution to the protection of common European natural heritage, using highly demonstrative approach for protection of the Slovak part of these “pan-European” populations of the species.

The project demonstrates to the state authorities and public the practical example of the coexistence of the target species with human population in urban areas. This approach has proved to be successful and can be copied and applied in other EU as well as non-EU countries, especially in states with similar urban architecture (e.g. Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, etc.).

The project has demonstrative character for a wider region of Central and South-East Europe. The replicability of the project refers to the coordinated, comprehensive and systematic approach to the specific conservation issue. Project actions focus on all administrative (decision-making) levels concerned, from the national level (Ministry of Environment) to the local communities, strictly applying subsidiarity principles. Never before neither in Slovakia nor in other EU country has been protection of swifts and bats in buildings dealt with in such a complex and systematic way, covering the whole geographical area of the country and involving all stakeholders and state authorities concerned.

The project has significant demonstration value especially in Slovakia where no similar project has been implemented before. Technical measures have been applied in such a scale for the first time in Slovakia, demonstrating model solutions for this specific conservation issue. It is important to point out that NATURA 2000 and nature conservation have their place not only in natural environment but also in urban areas.

The project and its actions are based on know-how and best-practice available and applied in the Europe, setting viable and repeatable example of protection of species that are not sufficiently protected by national and EU legislation. Very important best-practice aspect of the project is the fact that it is bringing together partners from different sectors, with different backgrounds and expertise, namely environmental non-governmental organizations focused on protection of birds and bats and business sector represented by construction companies, architects and managers of buildings.

6. Comments on the financial report

6.1. Summary of Costs Incurred

In the following table there are costs of coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries (partners) incurred since 01/01/2012 till 31/12/2013. From the total project budget of 1 481 248 EUR, 613 049,75 EUR has been incurred by 31/12/2013. This represents 41,39 % of the total project budget.

The first pre-financing payment that we have received was equivalent to 40% of the maximum Community financial contribution = 296 249,30 EUR.

Cost incurred from project start date to 31/12/2013 = 613 049,75 EUR

This represents 206,94 % of the first pre-financing payment – thus the condition of 150% threshold for mid-term pre-financing payment has been fulfilled.

| PROJECT COSTS INCURRED | | | |
|--|--|--|-------|
| Cost category | Budget according to the grant agreement* | Costs incurred within the project duration | %** |
| 1. Personnel | 752 822 | 333 670,42 | 44,32 |
| 2. Travel | 134 216 | 56 777,46 | 42,30 |
| 3. External assistance | 296 974 | 85 748,74 | 28,87 |
| 4. Durables: total <u>non-depreciated</u> cost | | | |
| - <i>Infrastructure sub-tot.</i> | | | |
| - <i>Equipment sub-tot.</i> | 176 062 | 99 572,20 | 56,56 |
| - <i>Prototypes sub-tot.</i> | | | |
| 5. Consumables | 24 270 | 5 664,66 | 23,34 |
| 6. Other costs | | | |
| 7. Overheads | 96 904 | 34 342,30 | 35,44 |
| TOTAL | 1 481 248 | 615 775,78 | 41,57 |
| PROJECT COSTS INCURRED | | | |
| Cost category | Budget according to the grant agreement* | Costs incurred within the project duration | %** |
| 1. Personnel | 752 822 | 331 902,07 | 44,09 |
| 2. Travel | 134 216 | 58 552,48 | 43,63 |
| 3. External assistance | 296 974 | 82 366,04 | 27,74 |

| | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 4. Durables: total <u>non-depreciated</u> cost | | | |
| - <i>Infrastructure sub-tot.</i> | | | |
| - <i>Equipment sub-tot.</i> | 176 062 | 98 049,24 | 55,69 |
| - <i>Prototypes sub-tot.</i> | | | |
| 5. Consumables | 24 270 | 8 167,62 | 33,65 |
| 6. Other costs | | | |
| 7. Overheads | 96 904 | 34 012,60 | 35,10 |
| TOTAL | 1 481 248 | 613 049,75 | 41,39 |

*) If the Commission has officially approved a budget modification indicate the breakdown of the revised budget. Otherwise this should be the budget in the original grant agreement.

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

General comments on costs incurred

- Bank account

After acceptance of the mid-term report the second payment should be sent to this bank account of coordinating beneficiary (BROZ):

Financial identification:

Name of the bank account: Bratislavske regionalne ochranarske zdruzenie

Name and address of the bank: Sberbank Slovensko, a.s., Vazovova 22, Bratislava 810 00

IBAN: SK75 3100 0000 0040 6001 2108

SWIFT: LUBASKBX

Financial identification – Annex F.1

Bank account of the Coordinating Beneficiary is interest-free.

- VAT

Coordinating beneficiary – BROZ is not in a position to recover the VAT paid under the project – therefore this amount is considered as eligible expenditure. Legal document proving that BROZ must pay and may not recover the VAT for the assets and services required for the project you can find in Annexes of Financial report:

BROZ VAT Declaration – Annex F.2

Associated beneficiaries:

- SOS/BirdLife Slovakia – may not recover VAT – therefore expenditures including VAT are eligible for the project, SOS/BirdLife Slovakia Declaration – Annex F.3

- SON – may not recover VAT – therefore expenditures including VAT are eligible for the project, SON Declaration – Annex F.4

- Expenses summary

BROZ – 378 301,77 EUR (total with non-recoverable VAT)

SOS/BirdLife Slovakia – 115 879,60 EUR (total with non-recoverable VAT)

SON – 118 868,38 EUR (total with non-recoverable VAT)

TOTAL: 613 049,75 EUR

- Interest accrued on the amounts received from EC

Only BROZ has accrued interest on the amount received from EC, since all associated beneficiaries have received payments from BROZ as reimbursement of really spent eligible costs. The first pre-financing payment from EC was received in 2011, before the project starting date. For that year the total interest accrued was 35,33 EUR. In 2012 the total interest accrued was 58,20 EUR, for the period since 01 January 2012 till 13 June 2012 (making the total interest accrued for both years 93,53 EUR). Then the bank account was changed on 14 June 2012. For the financial identification of this new account see the information given

above. Since this bank account of the Coordinating Beneficiary is interest-free, there has been no further interest accrued after this date.

Comments on budget cost categories

- Personnel

Eligible personnel costs were calculated on base of average annual hourly rate and real amount of working hours spent on the project recorded in timesheets. Average annual hourly rate comes out from annual personnel costs (annual gross salary plus obligatory social charges, but excluding any other costs) and annual number of working time units (excluding non-productive time such as weekends, holiday, sick leave etc.). Only real costs related to the project are reported in budget category "Personnel".

To cope with the project actions in the course of project implementation, actually more personnel was employed on the project as compared with the original project document. Nevertheless the total costs earmarked for the reporting period for the budget category "Personnel" according to the grant agreement were not exceeded, since the respective numbers of person days and the hourly rates were also amended accordingly.

- Travel

Travel and subsistence costs were charged in accordance with the internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiaries. We have purchased a car according to project proposal (9-seats van Ford Transit). This car has been used exclusively for implementation of the project's actions. Consumption of fuel for this car is calculated monthly - based on evidence of travel records (individual field trips) in the log-book. If needed, also private cars can be used by project personnel for the purpose of implementation of project actions. In such case costs for each trip are calculated according to national legislation and internal rules of BROZ. By reporting of travel and subsistence costs we distinguish the individual cost items – e.g. travel expenses for company car, travel expenses for private car, per diems, and airplane tickets - different cost items are reported separately.

Also the travel costs of volunteers participating in monitoring of swifts and bats in cities (Action A2 and Action A4) were included in this budget category. The involvement of volunteers was envisaged in the original project document, particularly for the monitoring and, in smaller extent, also for other project actions.

- External assistance

The external services were delivered in accordance with the approved project budget. Tenders were administered in accordance with the Slovak act on public procurement and internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiaries. By purchasing procedures for services (competitive tenders from potential subcontractors) rule "best value for money" was always respected. Invoices issued by subcontractors bear a clear reference to the LIFE+ project – code of the project, title / project acronym or a specific number.

There are some items included in this budget category that were not explicitly mentioned in the project proposal, particularly these related to the organization of international conference in Zvolen (accommodation of conference participants, rent of conference rooms, rent of equipment for interpretation and hiring external interpreters during the conference).

Some of the services were directly related to the monitoring of swifts and bats in buildings (Actions A2, A4), particularly development (programming) of online database. Although not explicitly mentioned in the financial form F3, these services were mentioned in the respective technical forms. Due to enormous extend of the task the large part of the swift monitoring was carried with the assistance of external staff, which cost were also put under this budget category. Some of the items (services) could not be envisaged in the time of preparation of project application, such as training of project personnel on work safety rules or carrying the public procurements by professional company that has become obligatory since recent changes of national legislation.

- Equipment

The equipment was purchased in accordance with the approved project budget. Purchasing procedures have been administered in accordance with the Slovak law on public procurement and internal rules of the coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiaries.

There are some items included in this budget category that were not explicitly mentioned in the project proposal, particularly these related to monitoring of swifts and bats in buildings (Actions A2, A4). The reason for not mentioning them was that in the time of preparation of project application we could not envisage all the kinds of equipment that would be needed for the proper implementation of these monitoring activities. Several such smaller equipment items were purchased (micro-cameras with spare parts, ultra-sound bat detectors, GPS devices). These have been proved to be extremely useful by the project participants for the proper and efficient implementation of the monitoring activities, providing solid basis for the practical conservation measures. These purchases have been communicated with and approved in advance by the Commission (see the letters from the Commission ref. No.: ENV/E-3/MM/jv ARES(2012)860242 dated on 13 July 2012 and ref. No.: ENV/E-3/MM/jv ARES(2013)1323552 dated on 24 May 2013. The total costs earmarked for the budget category "Equipment" according to the grant agreement were not exceeded by these purchases.

- Land purchase/lease

Not applicable for this LIFE project.

- Consumables

The expenses in this budget category were incurred in accordance with the approved project budget. The personal protection and working wear, working tools and consumable materials, were not specified in detail in the original project proposal. These represent mainly purchase of the items needed for the proper implementation of the practical conservation measures for swifts and bats (Actions C1,C2,C3), such as climbing equipment, plastic tubes, plastic grids, cement, glue, paint, screws and other components to fix the nest boxes on the buildings (fixtures, angle cleats).

There are also few items included in this budget category that were not explicitly mentioned in the original project proposal, particularly these related to the organization of international conference in Zvolen (Action D.4), e.g. refreshments and meals for the conference

participants, as well as the folders for the conference participants containing conference documents and papers. In the project original proposal some of these refreshments and meals were included in the budget category "Travel and subsistence cost" as subsistence cost to be reimbursed directly to the conference participants. However, since these costs were finally paid by project beneficiaries on behalf of conference participants, and invoiced with the respective invoices issued, we have considered as more appropriate to include them into the budget category "Consumables".

Overheads

Based on art. 25.13 of the Common Provisions, overheads are eligible for "flat-rate funding of a maximum of 7% of the total amount of eligible direct costs actually incurred, excluding land purchase/lease costs". We fully accept this rule.

6.2. Accounting system

The coordinating beneficiary BROZ and associated beneficiaries keep an analytic system of accounting. This cost centre based system enables to follow the financing of each project (including project LIFE+) separately, and to trace each project's cost, expenditures and income. All expenses included in the financial report were paid and duly booked in the accounting system of the coordinating beneficiary BROZ or associated beneficiaries of the LIFE+ project.

BROZ utilizes double entry method of recording income and expenditures. For the sake of traceability and transparent evidence the cost center accounting is used for all activities (1 project = 1 cost center). In addition to the cost center accounting, upon requirements of donor a separate bank account is kept. BROZ implements several projects at the same time. All necessary administrative provisions are taken to ensure that there is no overlapping between the projects, e.g. different bank accounts are established for different projects, different personnel is working on different projects (individual staff members are working only on one LIFE+ project), etc. Staff project task forces (teams) are clearly defined and mutually separated. Staff members are obliged to record their work time and tasks carried out using the standard time-sheets that are completed both manually and in electronic form. Time sheets are provided on a monthly basis, submitted to and approved by the project manager and/or supervisor, who sign them. The sum of hours per month cannot be higher than the sum indicated in the respective contract and paid according to pay slips. Time sheets are kept as a supporting documentation in BROZ's monthly salary agenda.

Any significant project expenditure must be approved in advance by the project manager and financial manager from BROZ as the Coordinating beneficiary. In general the project's expenditures are consulted between representatives of all project's beneficiaries in order to secure cost-efficiency and effective spending of the project budget. Staff members in charge are obliged to make sure that clear reference to the project is included in all contracts, time sheets, invoices etc. This is double-checked by the project financial manager.

6.3. Partnership arrangements

According to the partner's agreements the Associated Beneficiaries provide technical and financial reports every six months (twice a year). The Associated Beneficiaries provide their financial reports in the same form as it is submitted to the European Commission.

At the beginning of the project's implementation pre-financing payment of 20% of the respective budget was transferred to the Associated Beneficiaries' bank accounts. Further payments are done according to the financial reports and submitted financial documentation (pay rolls, time sheets, etc.). Final payment to the partners will be done after the final approval of the project's costs by the European Commission.

6.4. Auditor's report/declaration

This is not applicable yet. Project auditor will be hired and the project audit will be carried out at the end of the project.

6.5 Summary of costs per action

| Action number | Short name of action | Budget | 1. Personnel | 2. Travel and subsistence | 3. External assistance | 4.a Infrastructure | 4.b Equipment | 4.c Prototype | 5. Purchase or lease of land | 6. Consumables | 7. Overheads | TOTAL |
|---------------|--|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| A.1 | Methodology | 13 584 | 8 279,86 | 0,00 | 6 000,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 14 279,86 |
| A.2 | Monitoring - swifts | 112 928 | 46 639,28 | 13 233,07 | 20 828,90 | | 512,48 | | | 0,00 | | 81 213,73 |
| A.3 | Training | 41 134 | 8 422,25 | 395,29 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 8 817,54 |
| A.4 | Monitoring - bats | 79 504 | 22 787,24 | 2 616,82 | 1 319,50 | | 3 237,08 | | | 0,00 | | 29 960,64 |
| A.5 | Guideline | 6 600 | 213,29 | 0,00 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 213,29 |
| C.1 | Protection measures - swifts | 264 676 | 56 234,04 | 10 120,85 | 1 421,33 | | 10 291,81 | | | 911,61 | | 78 979,64 |
| C.2 | Nest boxes for swifts | 291 652 | 9 968,53 | 2 523,13 | 1 952,33 | | 53 109,32 | | | 2 448,78 | | 70 002,09 |
| C.3 | Protection measures - bats | 171 048 | 42 954,69 | 11 636,27 | 14 216,33 | | 25 189,31 | | | 898,56 | | 94 895,16 |
| D.1 | Promotional materials | 107 156 | 17 787,81 | 367,94 | 34 992,40 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 53 148,15 |
| D.2 | Meetings | 18 268 | 21 166,01 | 1 700,15 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 22 866,16 |
| D.3 | Excursions | 49 731 | 4 882,95 | 819,96 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 5 702,91 |
| D.4 | Workshops, national and international meetings | 31 175 | 8 304,41 | 1 921,57 | 5 017,95 | | 0,00 | | | 1 405,71 | | 16 649,64 |
| E.1 | Project management | 166 414 | 82 463,44 | 7 728,08 | 0,00 | | 7 232,20 | | | 0,00 | | 97 423,72 |
| E.2 | Audit | 12 474 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 0,00 |
| E.3 | After-LIFE Communication Plan | 0 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 0,00 |
| E.4 | Networking | 18 000 | 3 566,62 | 3 714,33 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | | | 0,00 | | 7 280,95 |
| | Overheads | 96 904 | | | | | | | | | 34 342,30 | 34 342,30 |
| | TOTAL | 1 481 248 | 333 670,42 | 56 777,46 | 85 748,74 | 0,00 | 99 572,20 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 5 664,66 | 34 342,30 | 615 775,78 |

7. Annexes

Annex A1.1: Methodology for protection of Common Swifts, bats and other species during reconstruction and insulation of buildings

Annex A2.1: Report from monitoring of Common Swifts in 2012

Annex A3.1: Lists of participants at trainings for stakeholders

Annex A4.1: Report from monitoring of Common Noctule in urban areas in winter season 2012-2013

Annex A5.1: Analysis of implementation of principles for protection of birds and bats in buildings in 2012

Annex A5.2: Guideline on protection of birds and bats during reconstruction and insulation of buildings – draft version

Annex C1.1: Catalogue of model solutions

Annex C2.1: Lists of participants at BOZP trainings

Annex D1.1: Leaflet *Under one roof with bats*

Annex D1.2: Leaflet *Common Swift*

Annex D1.3: Stickers with Common Swift

Annex D1.4: Small calendars with Common Swift and Common Noctule

Annex D1.5: List of media outputs

Annex D1.6: Articles and press releases

Annex D1.7: Manual on technical measures for protection of birds and bats in buildings

Annex D1.8: Design of exhibition *Return of Swifts*

Annex D1.9: Poster *Protection of Swifts and Bats in buildings*

Annex D1.10: Design of notice board

Annex D2.1: Lists of participants at meetings with stakeholders

Annex D3.1: Lists of participants at excursions and lectures for public

Annex D4.1: Lists of participants at national workshops, regional meetings and international conference

Annex E1.1: Evaluation of Questionnaire

Annex E1.2: Lists of participants at meetings of the Project's Steering Committee, Project Management Team and monitoring missions

Annex E4.1: Report from study tour to the Czech Republic (20-22/05/2013)

Annex E4.2: Reports from the other project's study tours

Annex F.1: Financial identification of BROZ

Annex F.2: VAT Declaration – BROZ

Annex F.3: VAT Declaration – SOS/BirdLife Slovakia

Annex F.4: VAT Declaration – SON

7.1 Administrative annexes

Partnership agreements between BROZ (Coordinating beneficiary) and SOS/BirdLife Slovakia and Bats Conservation Society in Slovakia respectively (both Associated beneficiaries) were submitted to EC along with the Inception report in October 2012.

7.2 Technical annexes

List of abbreviations used in the report:

BOZP – Bezpečnosť a ochrana zdravia pri práci (Work Safety Standards)
BROZ – Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development
ČESON – Czech Bat Conservation Society
ČSO – Czech Ornithological Society
EC – European Commission
EU – European Union
MoE – Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
NGO – non-governmental organization
PM – Project Manager
PMT – Project Management Team
PSC – Project Steering Committee
RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SNC – State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
SON – Slovak Bat Conservation Society
SOS/BirdLife Slovakia – Slovak Ornithological Society / BirdLife Slovakia
VAT – Value Added Tax

7.3 Dissemination annexes

7.3.1 Layman's report

This is not applicable yet. Layman's report will be delivered along with the final project report.

7.3.2 After-LIFE Communication plan – for LIFE+ Biodiversity and LIFE Environment Policy and Governance projects

This is not applicable yet. After-LIFE Communication plan will be delivered along with the final project report.

7.3.3 Other dissemination annexes

see the list of Annexes above

7.4 Final table of indicators

Not applicable for the mid-term report.

8. Financial report and annexes

- "Standard Payment Request and Beneficiary's Certificate" - duly signed original must be submitted
- For Nature projects, signed originals of the "Beneficiary's Certificate for Nature Projects" must be submitted to justify costs claimed for durable goods.
- If one or more associated beneficiary participates in the implementation of the project, "Consolidated Cost Statement for the Project" - signed original must be submitted
- "Financial Statement of the Individual Beneficiary" to be completed for each project beneficiary, i.e. signed, originals must be submitted by the coordinating beneficiary and by each associated beneficiary. It includes the individual transactions which are specified in the following forms (which necessarily do not have to be printed, but can be submitted on electronic media, e.g. CD ROM, USB key)
 - Personnel costs
 - Travel costs
 - External assistance
 - Infrastructure
 - Equipment
 - Prototype (only applicable for ENV and BIO projects)
 - Land purchase (only applicable for NAT projects)
 - Lease of land (only applicable for NAT projects)
 - Consumable material
 - Other direct costs
 - Overheads
 - Funding from other sources, divided in "Contribution of the associated beneficiary", "Other sources of funding" and "Direct income".
- Supporting documents, and further information or clarifications, requested in previous letters from the Commission (e.g. in the letter announcing mid-term pre-financing payment, in the feed-back letter following project visits, etc.), and not already submitted.
- Auditor's report using the standard reporting format