

Conservation of wetlands in Ķemeri National Park, Latvia

Project LIFE2002/NAT/LV/8496



FIRST INTERIM ACTIVITY REPORT WITHOUT PAYMENT REQUEST
Covering period 1 September 2002 – 29 September 2003



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Section 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the project

Ķemeri National Park is a newly-established (1997) nature conservation area in Latvia, comprising 380 km² of diverse habitats of EU priority such as mire woods, black alder swamps, raised bogs, rich fens etc. About a half of the territory (19,500 ha) is directly targeted by the project. The territory of the park and the project area host rich populations of species listed in the Bern Convention and EC Birds and Habitats Directives, e.g., *Crex crex*, *Aquila pomarina*, *Porzana porzana*, *Cyripedium calceolus*, *Lynx lynx*, *Canis lupus* etc. The lake Kaņieris is designated as an internationally important wetland under Ramsar Convention and is an important site for migratory and nesting bird species. Ķemeri National Park is an Important Bird Area and CORINE site. The area holds about 30 habitats of Community importance listed in the Bern Convention and EC Habitats Directive. Due to such a high biodiversity, Ķemeri National Park will be proposed for designation as a potential NATURA 2000 site because it meets all its criteria. Whole area of Ķemeri National Park would be proposed for designation as internationally important wetland under Ramsar convention.

In 2000-2001, with the support from the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, the nature protection (management) plan for the park was elaborated and its practical implementation was necessary. This LIFE project will be the first step toward implementation of the management plan through specific management measures related to the on-site protection of valuable wetland areas within the park. At the same time should be recognised that the nature protection plan is not detailed and numerous issues have to be developed while implementing this project.

Section 2. SUMMARY

2.1. Summary of the activities during report period

Project "Conservation of wetlands in Ķemeri National Park, Latvia" was launched in September 2002.

The project is based on Management plan for Ķemeri National Park, elaborated by a project supported by Danish Environmental Protection Agency in 2000 – 2001. Project is implementing most of the urgent management measures, foreseen in management plan, in order to address main threats to nature values of Ķemeri National Park (Ķemeri NP).

Main stress in the project is laid upon comparatively huge nature restoration and management activities, including the physical river restoration, big works in restoration of hydrology of high rised bog, restoration of sluice gates and fish path, introduction of large herbivores. Several activities are the first of such kind in Latvia – like meandering of the river, some aspects of restoration of high rised bog, building of fish path (none is successful in Latvia so far). Project team was employed and started to work in December 2002. Newcomer - Project Manager came to the park to lead the project.

Latvia and especially vicinities of Riga since the writing of the project have changed very much, sometimes to the benefit of project (upcoming agro-environmental subsidies to farmers) sometimes to the harm (multiple increase in land prices). Numerous unexpected changes have slowed down several project activities. But there is confidence that all the nature conservation goals set in the project could be achieved in due time and with the available financing. Detailed description of the activities, including modifications and delays are described in the following sections. Any additional information to the description of activities, such as pictures, copies of contracts, maps etc. is attached in Appendixes.

2.2. Summary table of activities

Number of action	Action	Time plan	Status
A.1.	Hydrological and engineering investigations	Sep 2002 - Jun 2003	In progress, start-up delayed until December 2002
A.2.	Call fo tender for construction works	Apr 2003 – Jun 2003	Delayed until Oct 2003
B.1.	Land purchase	Oct 2002 – Mar 2005	In progress, start-up delayed until December 2002
C.1.	Restoration of meteorological (hydrological) field station for monitoring purposes	Apr 2004 – Dec 2004	Would be restored hydrological monitoring system, Dec 2003 – Jun 2004
C.2.	Blocking drainage ditches and ensuring access to the bog surroundings after raising water level	Apr 2003 – Sep 2004	Delayed until Dec 2003, blocking of drainage ditches to be started in Jul 2004
C.3.	Restoring natural riverbed of the Slampe River	Apr 2004 – Sep 2004	Planned in spring - summer 2004
C.4.	Building the fish migration way at the sluice by the lake Kanieris	Jul 2003 – Dec 2003	Delayed, land should be acquired
C.5.	Lowering the level of dry land of 4 artificial izlands on lake Kanieris	Jul 2004 – Sep 2004	Planned in summer 2004
C.6.	Natural grazing of the floodplain meadows by the Lielupe and Slampe rivers	Apr 2003 – Dec 2003	Delayed, land should be acquired, changing agro-environmental support schemes
C.7.	Aerial photography of the territory	Apr 2005 – Jul 2005	Apr 2003 – Sep 2003, project sites to be photographed additionally in 2005
D.1.	Removing reed and scrubs in the area of 66 ha of meadows and calcareous fens	Each year Jul - Sep	In progress, Aug – Sep
D.2.	Mowing the hay in the area of 140 ha of meadow	Each year Jul – Sep	In progress, Aug – Sep
D.3.	Remove reed and scrubs from the islands on the lake Kanieris	Each year Jul – Sep	Made first cutting in Jan – Feb 2003
D.4.	Water level and regulation by the sluice at the lake Kanieris	Oct 2003 – Dec 2005	Planned, would be delayed
E.1.	Creating a home page of the park and the project	Oct 2002 – Dec 2005	Delayed, LIFE project homepage prepared during August 2003
E.2.	Preparing the layman’s report	Oct 2005 – Dec 2005	Planned in Oct – Dec 2005
E.3.	Producing a video for visitors of the information centre about nature conservation and rare and endangered species in the park	Jan 2003 – Sep 2005	In progress, start-up was delayed until Apr 2003
E.4.	Producing CD with info on the park and the project	Jul 2005 – Dec 2005	Planned in Jul – Dec 2005
E.5.	Establishing a management center at the lake Kanieris	Apr 2003 – Dec 2005	Delayed, land should be acquired
E.6.	Establishing a field station near river Lielupe	Apr 2003 – Dec 2003	Delayed, land should be acquired
E.7.	Media work	Sep 2003 – Dec 2005	In progress, start-up was delayed until Dec 2002
F.1.	Establishment of project office and administration	Sep 2003 – Dec 2003	Done

F.2.	Project administration	Sep 2003 – Dec 2005	In progress, start-up was delayed until Dec 2002
F.3.	Project monitoring	Sep 2003 – Dec 2005	In progress, start-up was delayed until Jan 2003

2.3. Milestones during report period and checklist of identifiable products

2.3.1. SUMMARY OF PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone	Number of action	Planned	Accomplished
Project office arranged	F1	September 2002	December 2002
Project staff contracted	F1	December 2002	December 2002
Technical investigations finished	A1	April 2003	Planned in October 2003
Call for Tender announced	A2	May 2003	Planned in December 2003
Meadows fenced	C6	September 2003	Planned in May 2004 (might be used mobile electrical fences)
Management centre at the lake established	E5	December 2003	Subject to land acquisition time
Sluice reconstructed	C4	December 2003	Subject to land acquisition time, but not earlier than autumn 2004
Slampe River meandered	C3	September 2004	-
Level of 4 artificial islands on the lake Kanieris is decreased	C5	September 2004	-
Meteorological station renovated	C1	December 2004	-
Field station by river Lielupe built	E6	December 2004	-
Purchase of land completed	B1	March 2005	-
Drainage ditches blocked; culverts road repaired	C2	September 2005	-
Aerial photos of the territory taken	C7	September 2005	-
Free-ranging horses and cows released	C6	December 2005	-
Meadows and fens cleaned from reeds and scrubs	D1	Continuous, ha/year	22 2 ha of calcareous meadow cleared
Typical hay meadow vegetation maintained	D2	Continuous, ha/year	100 183 ha mowed
Reeds and scrubs removed from islands of Kanieris	D3	Continuous, ha/year	12 February 2003 – 12 ha, 19 ha reed moved in August 2003
Water level control and regulation at the sluice	D4	Continuous	-
Media work	E7	Continuous	Started in December 2002, in process
Administration of the project	F2	Continuous	Started in December 2002, ongoing
Project monitoring	F3	Continuous	Started in January 2003, ongoing

2.3.2. SUMMARY OF DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Product	Number of action	Planned	Accomplished
Ķemeri NP home page with highlights on the project established	E1	June 2004	-
Layman's report	E2	December 2005	-
Two movies of different length and movie clip about nature conservation in the Ķemeri NP	E3	September 2005	-
CD produced	E4	December 2005	-
Final report	F2	December 2005	-

2.4. Problems or difficulties expected

Since the writing of the project there have passed two years. During these years Latvia in general and vicinities of Riga especially have experienced tremendous changes, which were not easy to predict before. Several significant changes create difficulties for the project. This has created several delays of the actions, although there is not seen serious danger to the realisation of these actions. The difficulties would be described more in detail in technical report but in short these are the following:

Increased land prices

The vicinity of the park to the capital city Riga and the booming realty market have undermined the land purchase plans of the project. Development of more than 40 new housing districts around Riga have risen the expectations in surroundings of Riga city. Thus the land price has risen up to 25 times in suitable building places during the last years – even if these are located in nature reserve zone. This refers to the agricultural areas as well – here the recent hopelessness has been replaced by the expectations of EU subsidies and new production markets. The farmers and other landowners are not willing to sell their fertile land for cheap anymore.

Thus the project management recognises that most likely the land in Odini polder would not be bought – instead of the planned 670 EUR/ha now some land dealers offer 16 000 EUR/ha! The other parcels of the land became more expensive as well.

This problem has delayed several other activities, like A1, A2, C3, C6 and E6. Project aims at purchasing the land with the financing available, but will justify the prices of these purchases by written conclusions of the State Land Service and private land evaluation expert.

Unsettled land disputes

At the beginning of the project several land disputes arouse among state (Ķemeri National Park) and Lapmzciems municipality. This has been also the case regarding the Lake Kanieris with shoreline and Starpinupite – the channel, joining Lake Kanieris to the sea. Municipality of Lapmezcims insisted on owning this land, and this uncertain situation set into danger realisation of the activities A1, A2, C4, C5 and E5. In beginning of September there was achieved agreement that Lake Kanieris would be owned by the state (Ķemeri NP) and formalities regarding this are settled now. Only at the end of September there was solved the long dispute regarding the Starpinupite channel and the designing might start now.

Meteorological station

It was not possible to hire the consultants during preparation of the project application – due to this the application envisaged that for proper monitoring of Greater Ķemeri Bog should be developed rather ambitious monitoring program with separate permanent station – just as this was done until 1993. Hydrogeologists, hired to elaborate the monitoring program in early 2003 have proposed cheap, simple monitoring system, which does not require building of separate station in the bog. But in turn – there would be needed new monitoring boreholes, as the former ones are damaged and unusable. In general it is expected that this action would be cheaper and more efficient than envisaged in the project application – f.e. could be developed independent monitoring of the cold sulphuric water genesis in the Greater Ķemeri Bog – the latter is creating extremely rare, unique habitats at the mouths of sulphuric springs. The monitoring itself should just be renamed – there would be *hydrological* not *meteorological* monitoring.

General Ķemeri NP budgeting issues

This is not a danger but rather challenge. The budget of Ķemeri National Park is not increasing as expected but rather diminishing. Ķemeri NP currently is dependant on state budget subsidies per 80%, and it is not expected that this rate would improve quickly. State subsidies in turn are diminishing and delayed due to the strict pre-accession and first EU accession year budgeting. This leads to numerous considerations how to make the project results financially more viable after the end of the project. It has been decided that the management of the meadows including the grazing activities would be shifted to the responsibility of local farmers, because they would receive subsidies about managing the meadows. As provided in the project, Ķemeri NP together with the partners would provide animals and fences, as well as the rights to manage the state land and receive subsidies, would be elaborated management requirements to the farmers. Project has prepared preliminary information about the expected EU agro-environmental subsidies and has started consultations with the farmers. Thus park would avoid the necessity to hire rangers and upkeep the fencing, animal health, insurance etc.

It has been decided also to develop rather modest and simple visitor facilities to decrease the maintenance costs. We expect to develop also such sluice gate and fish path, which would need little maintenance. But none of these changes should affect the efficiency of the project regarding its direct nature conservation goals.

Section 3. TECHNICAL REPORT (BY ACTIVITY)

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

ACTION A.1:

Name of action: Hydrological and engineering investigations

Time plan: Sep2002 – Jun2003

Progress:

In December 2002 there was analysed legislation and consulted State Environmental Impact Assessment Bureau regarding the need for environment impact assessment procedures. State Environmental Impact Assessment Bureau assured us that no assessment is needed for any of the project activities.

Restoration of the meteorological field station for monitoring purposes (C1). By tradition the former scientific field station in Greater Ķemeri Bog was called meteorological station although the main investigations were made in the hydrology field. After some considerations in March 2003 there was made an agreement with the expert in hydrogeology to prepare the proposal for hydrological monitoring of Ķemeri wetland.



Investigation of old monitoring boreholes

Investigations showed that there is no need for separate meteorological field station, as nowadays it is possible to provide the necessary set of data with far less monitoring activities. It has been decided that far cheaper for Ķemeri National Park would be to locate the necessary monitoring equipment in the central administrative building without developing a separate field station in Greater Ķemeri Bog. In Greater Ķemeri Bog there is needed only to locate simple stationary tools for meteorological monitoring and simple visitor facilities – informative shields about the high raised bogs and some other facilities, f.e. toilets. Closer investigation of the existing hydrological monitoring boreholes showed that most of those during the last ten years have been badly damaged. There is a need to make new

shallow groundwater boreholes for proper monitoring. The need for hydrological monitoring is further stressed by the development of new spa industries in Ķemeri town. New spa will use the unique product of Greater Ķemeri Bog – sulphuric waters. The cold sulphuric genesis results in numerous sulphuric springs in Ķemeri National Park. Around the mouths of these springs in sulphuric deposits there exist unique habitats.

Thus we propose to develop in Ķemeri National Park qualitative and cheap Greater Ķemeri Bog hydrological monitoring without development of separate monitoring field station.

Renovation of hydrological regime in Greater Ķemeri Bog (C2). In December 2002 there was organised price quotation and selected designer for this action. The finalisation has been delayed until September 2003 to elaborate better the most complicated part of the design – flooding with shallow water the abandoned peat quarries. This activity was envisaged in the project document but still it is the first of this kind in Latvia. This innovative solution

would solve the problems in this drained, overgrowing area, providing new, exciting bird area.

We plan to announce the tender in October 2003. The contract could be signed in January – February 2004, works would be done during the spring – summer of 2004. Besides the bigger works mentioned above there would be built numerous smaller dams on ditches around the Geater Ķemeri Bog. Most of the dams would be built during the driest time of the year – July – October 2004. The remaining dams would be built during summer 2005.

Restoration of natural riverbed in Slampe River (C3) In December 2002 there was organised



Slampe River today. To the left - proposed site for river restoration

price quotation and selected design company. This is the first case of restoring the natural bed of a river in Latvia. The responsible institutions in Latvia did not have prior experience with the permitting of deliberate destroying of irrigation system for nature conservation needs. This slowed down receiving of the necessary permits but still there is confidence that this activity would not be delayed. The land in the project site

was not owned by the state initially. Most of the land was purchased in June 2003 after hard talks with the

previous owner – bargaining over the high price of the land delayed the purchase and consequently the design works (see description in B.1.). Design works were completed at the end of September. We plan to start the tender of works in October and sign the agreement with the winner of the tender in December 2003 – January 2004. The works here should not be done during the breeding season – thus the most likely time of the works would be in January – March 2004 or July – September 2004.



Sluice gate on Starpinupite - this summer it created danger to the population of birds in the lake

Building the fish migration way at the sluice by the lake Kanieris (C4) Although the land around the sluice belongs to the state, it was unexpectedly litigated by the municipality of Lapmežciems until we came to an agreement in September 2003. Now there is agreed that Ķemeri National park would own the land under the constructions of the sluice gate and there would be secured free access to the sluice gate. The remaining issues regarding the disputed land would be

agreed separately, as this is not subject of the current project. This discussion delayed the start of the design works.

Meanwhile during the dry July the old sluice gate did not keep the water well and the level in lake Kanieris fell dangerously low. August was wet and the situation improved. We hope very much that this was the last summer with the old sluice gate – we fear that in the

next summer it would not keep the water anymore and the bird population in this Ramsar site would be seriously endangered. Should be mentioned that the sluice building might look rather good at first sight but the sluice mechanism and concrete is of bad quality.

The priority in this project component is to renovate the sluice gate to keep the level of the water in the lake. Kanieris Lake is Ramsar site and its bird population is the priority in the management of this lake. But we see here the possibility to increase the biological diversity by developing such sluice gate, which allows the fish to migrate from the sea to the lake system and back. Currently the sluice gate makes this impossible. The fish path might enable migration of pike, pike-perch, other fish. We expect to make non-mechanical gates, which by their form allow the river to flow throughout the year without mechanical barriers – just forming rapids. The shape of the gates should allow faster escape of the water during floods. For designing this gate we would like to attract a foreign consultant as currently there is little experience in designing such buildings in Latvia. We would be happy to receive non-mechanical sluice gates also due to the fact that such system is cheaper and simpler to maintain, there would be less risk to the bird population and less possibilities for poachers to catch the fish at sluice.

During October 2003 there would be organised topographical measurement of the project site. There would be ordered official conclusion about the present technical condition of the sluice gates. After this the National Board of Fisheries would be asked to issue requirements for the fish migration way to be built. We would like to use for the conceptual design and possibly for technical design an international expert as there is no successful experience with similar projects in Latvia. We expect that during the winter 2003/2004 there could be made decision whether it is possible to build the sluice gate as described here or should be developed conventional sluice gate with fish path – or without fish path as the least desirable option. The building of the sluice gate could take place during July – October 2004, when it would not affect the bird population and there would be less water.

Lowering the level of dry land of 4 artificial islands on the lake Kanieris (C5) This action is simple and in another place it would not need specific design works to be done. But as the islands are located in protected area, formal design is needed. The design would be prepared during October – November 2003. Currently the islands are cleared of bush and reeds to ease the designing work (activity D.3.).

Establishment of a management centre at the lake Kanieris (E5) Action was postponed due to the unclear land property issues – Lapmezciems municipality litigated the rights of Ķemeri



The Kanieris boat station

National Park to own this land. We propose not to build a new field station, as this is infrastructure development activity, which might be not supported by LIFE program. It is considered that there would be more reasonable to develop the basic management and information facilities – to make repairs to the existing sheds of the boats, and erect a monitoring tower.

Kanieris lake is divided in protection zones, and

monitoring tower would be simple solution to overlook the lake and check whether the visitor

boats are not in the protected zone. The monitoring tower would be open to visitors as well, and there would be located information desks at the tower and in it.

The design of the monitoring tower and other proposed activities will start after receiving the acceptance of the changes in this activity.

Implementation of Actions C4, D3 and D4 would be secured from existing facilities in the central administrative building of the park and existing facilities at the lake.

Establishment of field station near river Lielupe (E6) Land here should be purchased under action B1. Designing of this facility has been delayed by high land prices and consequent slow land purchase procedures (see more detailed explanations at B1). One more reason for slowing down this action – considerations about the current changes in state support to agriculture (see description at the action C6). Irrespective of these delays there would be made simple visitor facilities on the state owned land, including informative shields about floodplain meadows and bird watching tower.

Variations/complications/delays: Delay of the start-up – project team started to work in December 2002. Most design works have been delayed due to the reasons described above.

Additional information: NO

ACTION A.2:

Name of action: Announcing Call for Tender works

Time plan: Apr – Jun 2003

Progress: Started preparation of tender documents to implement the activities C2 and C3.

Variations/complications/delays: Activities have been delayed until autumn 2003, due to the reasons described in Progress section of action A1.

Additional information: NO

B. Purchase/lease of land and/or rights

ACTION B.1:

Name of action: Land purchase

Time plan: Oct 2002 – Mar 2005

Progress: Action started in December 2002, as the project team started to inform the landowners about the possibility to sell their land. Already the first reactions showed that the land price in region has raised tremendously. For example the newspaper adverts showed that some land dealers are ready to buy the land in Odini polder (Map No XII in project application) per 16 000 EUR/ha. The project planned to buy the land here per 670 EUR/ha.

There are several reasons for this sudden increase of land price:

- 1) Until years 2000 – 2001 land market in Latvia was silent. The land prices given by the state as cadastral value of the land more or less corresponded to the market prices then. Several hundred thousands lived in Riga in uncomfortable, dilapidating Soviet apartment houses without much choice to change their life for better. But recently the income level of people, especially in Riga, raised up to the level, when thousands of families were able to afford mortgages. Stable and quickly growing economy decreased the mortgage rates as well. There mushroomed more than 40 new housing areas around Riga – some even 35 km from the centre of Riga. Ķemeri NP is located 45 km from Riga. Some areas in the park seem more valuable to the builders due to the vicinity to major transit roads, lakes, sea and rivers. Western part of Ķemeri NP in fact is located in Riga metropolis – the centre of the city can be reached in 40 minutes.

The dramatic increase in the price is best visible in the northern part of **Odini polder** –

here the market price has reached 16 000 EUR/ha, while in 2001 it was around 600 EUR/ha. Southern part of the polder (which is part of the LIFE project – see map No XII in project application) has seen lesser increase in price as here apply stricter nature conservation rules and it is further from the main road. Still it is beyond the possibilities of the project to purchase all the land in the southern part of Odini polder.

The risk to see here new housing area developing still is rather low due to the stricter nature conservation rules which do not allow development of new housing areas here. The land here belongs to Sala municipality. Although the municipality supports the aim of the national park to develop here natural area, it can not influence the development of free land market in landscape zone of the park – the land here is owned by numerous private owners. This area would be the next priority of Kemeru National Park – after the current project there would be developed new project proposal focusing on this area. Besides the purchase of the land here are needed rather expensive earthworks as the current polder is not natural river floodplain and it is expensive to sustain it. Currently the natural value of Odini polder is not that high as it could be after the renaturalisation project. The natural value of Lielupe meadows to be managed by other current project activities (C6) is by far higher.

- 2) Latvia had large surplus of agricultural land recently – most of it was not used actively due to the low profit of nearly any agricultural activity. Thus the price of the land in the countryside was cheap – in Kemeru NP even 200 EUR per/ha. This situation in recent years has changed as well, although in a less dramatic way. The fertile land in the southern part of the park is now actively managed – and the farmers are gaining here good profit during the last years. This has enabled them to participate in the land market in efforts to buy more agricultural land. The expected subsidies from EU make the agriculture in this region of Latvia even more promising.

The limited possibilities to manage the land in Kemeru National Park limits the increase in price, but the land here (mainly Slampe River – map No. IV and Lielupe meadows – map No. X and XI) is more expensive than planned anyway.

We propose to rank Odini polder as the lowest priority in land purchase component of this project and to focus more on areas needed for successful accomplishment of other project activities, like Slampe River project site (activities C3, C6), Lielupe floodplains (activities C6, E6).

After long bargaining over the price in June 2003 there was purchased most of the land in lower Slampe River. This enabled the further design works at the design of restoration of natural riverbed in Slampe River (action C3). There were bought three land parcels with two purchase agreements:

Map No.	Parcel No.	Area	Priority species	Planned price, EUR/ha	Real price paid, EUR/ha
IV	1	95,8	Crex crex	273	745
IV	2	21,7	Crex crex	273	745
-	-	41,8	Crex crex	Not envisaged in the project proposal	745

Thus we acquired 159,3 ha of land, spending 74 871 LVL (around 118 650 EUR). The former owner got another buyer, who was ready to buy this land on the same price.

We had to buy also adjacent land parcel, which was not envisaged in the project. The reason for this: this land has the same biological value as the adjacent areas. Former owner offered the purchase as a single offer. If we would decide to buy only the first two parcels, the price would be higher – in total nearly the same price as for all the three parcels. The previous owner – farmer – had this requirement due to the fact that this last parcel of land would be cut off from other his properties. Another reason for this purchase – this land was under risk to be purchased for intensive farming (rapeseed production). Now the park has got valuable zone protecting from vicinity of intensive agriculture the future Slampe River project site (C3, C6). We would like to ask for your approval to this change in land purchasing plans.

The price of the purchase is justified as shown in Attachment the No. 3.

Our next priority is to buy the remaining part of the land around Slampe River and to buy the land in Lielupe floodplains (see in project application - Maps No. X and XI). It is expected that for several of the land parcels in Lielupe floodplains Ķemeri National Park instead of buying will offer longterm management agreements with the owners. The exact number of these agreements and area is to be clarified further in the project.

In general there exists high risk than all the expected 877,5 ha will not be bought. Still we



Land, which was purchased

consider that it would be possible to buy most of the planned land parcels except Odini polder. For part of the land parcels there could be made longterm management agreements with the landowners, if the time and financial limits of this project would not permit purchase of the land. The land prices in general would be higher than shown in project document – but the price would be substantiated with the conclusions of certified realty appraisers. The purchase of the land around Slampe River was extremely important achievement – we are

convinced that in some years the price here would be far higher making the Slampe River project impossible.

Variations/complications/delays: The land to be purchased is ranked according to priority in the following order: 1) project activity sites in Slampe and Lielupe floodplains 2) forested areas – because here the danger from private activities is higher than in meadows; 3) other land except Odini polder; 4) Odini polder – most likely it would be not possible to buy land here. The price is higher than expected.

Additional information: YES, added

C. Non-recurring management

ACTION C.1:

Name of action: *Restoring the meteorological field station for monitoring purposes*

Time plan: Apr – Dec 2004

Progress: Action was not started due to the reasons described in A1. Currently external consultant – hydrogeologist is analysing the previous monitoring data as well as all the available hydrogeological information to elaborate justified monitoring plan.

Variations/complications/delays: The accent is changed - the main priority should not be the building of the meteorological field station. The definite goal of this action should be development of stable, justified and cheap hydrological and meteorological monitoring system for Greater Ķemeri Bog. It is planned to make several new boreholes, purchase necessary monitoring equipment and develop simple visitor information facilities. This change of the concept has delayed the start of the action. It should not create danger to the whole project schedule, as the action is simplified.

Should be mentioned that no state institution is having or planning to have such monitoring system here besides Kemer National Park.

To simplify the reporting we would keep the name of action – it will still contain the word “meteorological”.

Additional information: NO

ACTION C.2:

Name of action: *Blocking drainage ditches and ensuring access to the bog surroundings after raising water level*

Time plan: Apr 2003 – Sep 2005

Progress:

Design nearly completed - see the description at A1. It is planned to elaborate the tender documents during September – November and announce the tender during the winter.

Variations/complications/delays: No practical works were done during this summer as there was no design ready. This is not creating any danger – it is possible to do most of the works during the next season, and if we do not manage something next summer – the remaining work could be done during summer 2005.

Additional information: NO

ACTION C.3:

Name of action: *restoring natural riverbed of the river Slampe*

Time plan: Apr – Sep 2004

Progress:

Not started.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION C.4:

Name of action: *Building the fish migration way at the sluice by the lake Kanieris*

Time plan: Jul – Dec 2003

Progress:

No progress due to the reasons described in A1.

Variations/complications/delays: Action was delayed due to the unsolved land property issues. There seems to be no danger for realisation of this activity.

Additional information:

ACTION C.5:

Name of action: *Lowering the level of dry land of 4 artificial islands on the lake Kanieris*

Time plan: Jul – Sep 2004

Progress:

Not started yet.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION C.6:

Name of action: *Natural grazing of the floodplain meadows by the rivers Lielupe and Slampe*

Time plan: Apr – Sep 2003, Apr 2004 – Dec 2005

Progress:

Not started. In Lielupe meadows the land has not been purchased yet. In Slampe meadows the land was purchased in June 2003. The project is making changes to organisational set-up of this action – we are organising local farmers to take the responsibility about the stock of animals in these meadows.

As Latvians citizens voted for joining to EU, starting from 2004 there would be available financing for agro-environmental support schemes in Latvia. Project management took contact with the ministry of Agriculture and with the local division of Agriculture Support Centre and investigated the future plans in this area. As a result project prepared short, simplified information material which is serving as a basis for further negotiations with the farmers about the new possibilities in managing the land in Ķemeri National Park. We were glad to find several subsidy schemes well fitting to our needs. For example there would be payments for the manager of meadows in protected areas. Especially high payment is expected for managers of especially valuable meadows. In this rather short list of meadows there are listed also the floodplain meadows along River Lielupe.

These subsidies would make the management of these meadows a profitable business for local farmers. At the same time state organisations, like Ķemeri National Park, can not receive these subsidies.

This new situation created new opportunities for our plans to manage these meadows with the help of koniks and wild bowids. We have started consultations with the local farmers. Our goal is to find a good manager, who will enter in longterm agreement with the park about the management of these floodplain meadows. National park is not going to ask any rent for the use of the state land here, but there would be such requirements as maintaining the grazers, upkeeping the fences and, of course, following the nature conservation rules. Our partners – Stichting Ark and WWF – have been informed about this change. In the

meeting with the Stichting Ark the Dutch representative expressed his consent to our intentions.

We consider this to be a more secure scheme as this change would decrease the administrative costs for the park, improve our co-operation with local people, and - about the animals there would care more experienced farmers.

In October we will start the contract negotiations with the farmers, where would be elaborated the responsibilities about the building of the fence, exact location of the fence, access roads etc. We expect to start the building of the fence next spring.

In Slampe floodplains the animals would be living while there would be on-going the hydrotechnical works (action C3). We do not see here problem as the initial number of koniks would be low and there is possible to find large areas untouched by the works. Lielupe flodplains are very huge and mostly swampy and hard to access. There would be need to repair some smaller bridges to access the remote areas. The moving of the meadows this summer turned to be very valuable – we have gained much knowledge about the necessary infrastructure here before starting to make fences. We expect that it would be possible to make arrangements about the grazing of private land, which is not purchased yet.

Variations/complications/delays: Delayed due to the organisational changes and waiting of the results of EU referendum. No danger in realisation of this action seen.

Additional information:

ACTION C.7:

Name of action: *Aerial photography of the territory*

Time plan: Apr – Jun 2003, Jul – Sep 2005

Progress:

During the summer 2003 we found out that the State Land Service this spring has made the aerial photographing in middle part of Latvia in scale 1:10 000 – it covers nearly all the park except the far west, which would be photographed in the next year. This is regular activity of this institution which will be not repeated in next five years – until 2008. The offer was cheaper than expected and of high quality. Currently the project management is negotiating with the State Land Service. Should be mentioned that State Land Service is Latvian state institution but part of its activities, like preparation of such aerial photographs is of commercial character – thus Ķemeri National Park has no possibility to receive these maps for free. We plan to buy the set of printouts and files from spring 2003. In spring 2005 there would be repeatedly taken photos only in those areas of Ķemeri National Park, where active management activities would be taking place.

Variations/complications/delays: Purchase of the maps started earlier due to the good opportunity to make cheap contract.

Additional information: NO

D. Recurring management

ACTION D.1:

Name of action: *Removing reed and scrubs in the area of 66 ha of meadows and calcareous fens*

Time plan: Jul – Sep 2003, Jul – Sep 2004, Jul – Sep 2005.

Progress:

Works started in the middle of August. The first year seems to be the most complicated as the meadows in places have overgrown with thick bushes and trees. Purchased two chainsaws, actively used also the chainsaws owned previously by the park.

In August – September there was cleared the calcareous meadow (2 ha) near Lake Kanieris – this activity was needed as this unique meadow was not cleared away for decades.

In September there was started clearing of bushes in wider area in Lielupe meadows.

In future these areas would be managed mostly by farmers, who would receive subsidies for these activities.

Project would elaborate separate plans for managing these meadows – these plans would envisage the frequency, season and method of managing these meadows.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION D.2:

Name of action: *Mowing the hay in the area of 140 ha of meadows*

Time plan: Jul – Sep 2003, Jul – Sep 2004, Jul – Sep 2005.

Progress:

Works started at the end of July. In Lielupe meadows contracted local farmer, this farmer is



Mowing the Lielupe meadows

the most likely future manager of this area (see description of C6). There was collected information about the conditions in meadows. Basing on this information there would be ordered simple design to make some hydrological changes and bridges to facilitate the management of this area. In Slampe River meadows contracted another local farmer, who is the most likely manager in this area.

There have been mowed around 33 ha

of Lielupe meadows, 130 ha were mowed in Slampe and ~ 10 ha were grazed in Slampe by a livestock of

nearby farmer. Here the managed area is bigger than initially planned in the project – there have been managed floodplains owned by the state and located further north from the proposed Slampe project site.

In future all these areas would be managed mostly by farmers, who would receive subsidies for these activities – this makes us secure that this activity would be continued after the project completion. Project plans to elaborate separate plans for managing these

meadows – these plans would envisage the frequency, season and method of managing these meadows.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION D.3:

Name of action: *Removing reed and scrubs from the islands on the lake Kanieris*

Time plan: Jul – Sep 2003, Jul – Sep 2004, Jul – Sep 2005.

Progress:

As the islands were overgrown with thick bush, the works were started in late winter 2003 to simplify the later planning of the lowering of the islands (action C5). Cutting was started again in the beginning of September 2003. At the end of August 2003 for one week there was rented reed-cutting equipment to remove the reed around the islands – there were mowed around 19 ha of reed in the lake around the islands.

Project plans to elaborate separate plans for managing the islands – these plans would envisage the frequency, season and method of managing the islands.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION D.4:

Name of action: *Water level control and regulation by the sluice at the lake Kanieris*

Time plan: Oct 2003 – Dec 2005

Progress:

Action not started yet.

Variations/complications/delays: It is expected that the action would be delayed due to the reasons described in A1. In a case of successful design the costs of this activity might be lower.

Additional information: NO

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results

ACTION E.1:

Name of action: *Creating a home page of the park and the project*

Time plan: Oct 2002 – Dec 2005

Progress:

Due to the uptight budget situation in the park the work at the homepage was started only recently – in August 2003. Currently there is prepared the homepage about the LIFE project – see it in English at http://www.kemeri.gov.lv/life/Eng/life_Eindex.htm. The page contains basic information about the LIFE project, its goals, some documents (time schedule in comparison with the real performance, part of the project application), photographs, geographical map with the locations of main activities, list of links to all project financiers, partners, to all the other LIFE projects in Latvia and one project in Estonia. This page would be updated once in a one - two months to include recent documents, photographs, news, time schedule and additional links.

Variations/complications/delays: YES, development of the homepage started in August 2003.

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.2:

Name of action: *Preparing the layman's report*

Time plan: Oct – Dec 2005

Progress:

Not started.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.3:

Name of action: *Producing a video for visitors of the information centre about nature conservation and rare and endangered species in the park*

Time plan: Jan 2003 – Sep 2005

Progress:

The project document provided that the video would be produced by Environmental Film Studio. But according to the Latvian legislation there was needed to organise open tendering for selecting the company. During the January – May there were prepared tender documents. During the tendering period several companies showed the interest, but finally there came only one bid from Environmental Film Studio. As this bid was in concordance with the requirements, in June we started contract negotiations with Environmental Film Studio. Contract was signed in late August and the work was started. There are envisaged several milestones during the making of films and the agreement provides that the final product would be ready in the beginning of September 2005.

During our preliminary consultations we were advised by several specialists to include in the tendering bid also requirement to make short clip about the park. This would be ~ 30 seconds long, impressive movie clip, showing the main, most impressive values of Ķemeri National Park. The necessity for the clip is the following:

- there is need for short introduction about the park often. In many cases the public is bored nowadays with longer presentations, but dynamic, elaborate clip is very good way to turn attention to any presentation. For example there would be needed presentation about the Slampe River project, which would be interesting issue in numerous seminars in the future. As 30 seconds long movie clip does not take much hard disk memory and time, this clip always would be very beneficial introduction to any presentation, introducing the presenting institution. This clip always would be good, dynamic introduction to any specific presentation about the park in schools, in municipalities or enterprises. This clip would be used by television in cases when there would be presented some information about the park.

Thus we included the requirement to make the clip in the tendering documents. Still the price offered by Environmental Film Studio turned out to be considerably lower than planned in the budget.

During the contract negotiations there were made also changes in the lengths of movies – the shorter video would be around 10 – 15 min long but the in-depth movie would be up to 1 h long. The reason for this change is the need to adjust to the habits of contemporary public. General public, which is the auditorium of the shorter movie, would be bored by 15

– 20 min long movie irrespective of the dynamics and effects shown in the movie. But the specialists would be interested to look 1 h long movie, which will include deeper look at all the values of the park as well as the deeds of LIFE project.

Variations/complications/delays: Start of the action is delayed due to the tendering procedure. This does not create any danger to the quality and content of the movie, as the activities have been cast in good quality by the employees of the park, and there is agreed that this material could be used in the movie.

To the final products of the action added short clip about the Ķemeri National Park. There is slight change in the expected length of the movies – the shorter version of the movie would be 10 – 15 min long instead of the planned 15 – 20 min. The longer version would be approximately 60 minutes long instead of the planned 45 minutes.

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.4:

Name of action: *Producing CD with info on the park and the project*

Time plan: Jul – Dec 2005

Progress: According to the time plan, action has not begun yet.

Variations/complications/delays: Currently project plans to produce DVD instead of the CD. The reason: the use of technologies during the last years has changed and now DVDs are widely used. DVD has higher capacity and thus there appears the possibility to include all the movies prepared by Environmental Film Studio, as well as digital presentations, important documents, interactive maps etc. There would be needed tendering procedure in order to select company. We have been consulted by Environmental Movie Studio about the pricing on preparation of such DVD's and are confident that this change in media of the deliverable would not increase the price above the limits set in the project for this activity.

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.5:

Name of action: *Establish a management centre at the lake Kanieris*

Time plan: Apr – Sep 2003

Progress:

The action has not been started as the land ownership in project site was litigated – see description at A1. We plan to develop the management center during the summer 2004.

Variations/complications/delays: Delayed to summer 2004, when the land would be owned by the state and more detailed design elaborated. Instead of field station we would propose to make repairs to boat sheds and development of lake monitoring tower.

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.6:

Name of action: *Establish a field station near river Lielupe*

Time plan: Apr – Sep 2003

Progress:

The action has not been started as the land in project site still is not owned by the state (see description at A1). The requested price exceeds the price in project proposal several times - see description at B1. We have decided to develop the field station after there would be

found the manager of the meadows (see description at C6) and together with the manager selected the exact location of fencing for the grazers. The location of fences would define to great extent the location of the field station.

It is expected that the field station would be developed in summer 2004

Variations/complications/delays: YES, delayed to summer 2004, as the land in project site is not owned by state, the extent of the fences would be decided in joint agreement with the manager of the meadows.

Additional information: NO

ACTION E.7:

Name of action: *Media work*

Time plan: Sep 2002 – Dec 2005

Progress:

Media work started in December 2002, when project team started to work. Up to now there have been around 10 publications, mostly in local newspapers. The information about the open tenders has been distributed more widely – there was certain interest about the movie tender.

There is agreed that project secretary is preparing short descriptions about any events taking part in project and sending these to the news agencies and local newspapers. We expect that in future, as there would be more exciting news, project will have wider coverage in mass media.

Variations/complications/delays: Delayed the start of the action, as the project team started to work in December 2002.

Additional information: NO

F. Overall project operation

ACTION F.1:

Name of action: *Establishment of project office and administration*

Time plan: Sep – Dec 2002

Progress: During September – November 2002 there was recruited project team. The team started to work on 1st December 2002. The project management currently consists of the following staff: **project manager, project co-ordinator, land issues lawyer, bookkeeper and secretary**. Under the action C1 it is planned to employ also geologist. Currently there is under elaboration the description of work tasks for geologist. The geologist may start the work in December 2003 – February 2004.

During November – December there were made minor repairs in the rooms, where is located project management now. Project management got the opportunity to select among several rooms. Finally it was decided that the project management would not be located in separate rooms, but would mix in with the other employees of the park, which definitely was a good solution.

The procurement of the necessary equipment took more time due to the price quotation and tendering procedures. In February there were supplied two computers and one server, digital photcamera. During the February - March the server was installed, making the computer network in Ķemeri National Park more stable. In March there were supplied

Geographical Information System and colour printer. In May there were supplied videoprojector and screen.

Ķemeri National Park announced open tender about the supply of two cars under the LIFE project. The tendering procedure was repeated two times and thus it made possible to "beat the price down" and purchase two pickups. The cars were supplied in early September 2003. One of the cars is used by project co-ordinator for daily check-up of current project activities – cutting of bushes, meadows, reed around the park. Another car would be used by the person in the national park, responsible about the practical activities. This car would be of great assistance to organise the building of fences, supervising the infrastructure in the park etc.

Initially project planned to buy a minitractor. But during the winter 2002/2003 there were made repairs to the minitractor owned by the park previously, and this equipment turned out to be quite usable. It was chosen to buy an ATV (four wheel working motorcycle) instead. There was organised price quotation and in March there was supplied new ATV. This equipment will have the following benefits – it would be the only equipment able to cross the numerous wetlands we have got – it would be of great assistance in building fences, nature trails and any other kind of infrastructure in high rised bogs, swampy floodplains meadows, lagoon lakes etc. throughout the year.

Variations/complications/delays: Instead of 4x4 Lada-Niva we purchased "Ford Ranger" pickup. The total price of the two cars does not exceed the sum available for this purchase. Instead of minitractor purchased ATV.

Additional information: NO

ACTION F.2:

Name of action: *Project administration*

Time plan: Sep 2002 – Dec 2005

Progress:

For each position of the project team there have been elaborated Terms of Reference, which form a part of the contract of employment.

Project Steering Committee has the same members as the previous DANCEE project – representatives from all the local municipalities, Ministry of Environment, Latvian Fund for Nature. There have been two Project Steering Group Meetings – on 27th March and 17. June – in both Project Manager presented the project and its actualities, were discussed controversies with the Lapmezciems municipality as well (see description at A1). Next Steering Group Meeting takes place at 30th September.

In the beginning of September there was established internal Project Management Committee which would meet once in a month. Project Management Committee consists of all the project team members, Director of National Park, Manager of Scientific Department, Manager of Administrative Department. Project Manager before the meeting is preparing short written report about each of the project activities, and during the meeting this report is discussed, prepared minutes.

There is established the necessary bookkeeping system, we are following the rules, set by EU LIFE program as well as the Latvian legislation.

Upon necessity – but rather often – there are contacted related projects in Latvia. At 2 – 3. October there is planned experience exchange visit to Teici State Reserve, LIFE project "Measures to ensure the nature conservation management of Teici Area". Project staff is participating in different events organised by the other projects.

Variations/complications/delays: NO

Additional information: NO

ACTION F.3: Project monitoring

Name of action:

Time plan: Sep 2002 – Dec 2005

Progress:



Setting up the monitoring stations

In January 2003 there was contracted consultant from Latvian University, Faculty of Biology to make the biological monitoring plan for project activities. In April this plan was prepared. Many of the necessary monitoring activities are carried out already by the existing monitoring system. There was needed to develop network of monitoring points in the meadows - mainly for monitoring the changes in vegetation. This network was established by the employees of the park, using the GPS equipment. There was collected initial data in 23 stations of botanical monitoring and 8 stations of hydro-biological monitoring. At the end of each year there would be prepared simple biological monitoring reports.

The description of the development of hydrological monitoring system is described earlier, at A1 and C1.

Variations/complications/delays: There was delayed the start of the action. This will not influence the results of the monitoring in any way.

Additional information: NO