LIFE Project Number

<LIFE13 NAT/HU/000081>

Inception Report

Covering the project activities from 01/09/2014 to 31/05/2015

Reporting Date

<08/06/2015>

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym

<ROLLER – Conservation of the European Roller (Coracias garrulus in the Carpathian Basin>

Data Project

Project location	Hungary and Romania
Project start date:	<01/09/2014>
Project end date:	<31/03/2020>
Total budget	€ 5 046 097
EC contribution:	€ 3 784 572
(%) of eligible costs	75%

Data Beneficiary

Name Beneficiary	MME BirdLife Hungary
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2. List of abbreviations

MME – BirdLife Hungary
APMSM / APM Satu Mare – Agenția pentru Protecția Mediului Satu Mare
BNPD – Bükk National Park Directorate
KNPD – Kiskunság National Park Directorate

AB – Associated Beneficiary
ANPM – Agentia Nationala pentru Protectia Mediului
AWP – Annual Working Plan
CB – Coordinating Beneficiary
MMAP – Ministerul Mediului, Apelor si Padurilor
NAP – National Action Plan
NEPA – National Environmental Protection Agency
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
PA – Partnership Agreement
PTT – Platform Transmitter Terminal
RMEWF – The Romanian Ministry of Environment Water and Forest
SPA – Special Protection Area

3. Executive summary

3.1. General progress

Major achievements:

Rollers are long range migrants spending the winter in the sub-Saharan Africa. As planned in the proposal in the 9 months following the start of the Roller project (and exceeding the arrival of the target species to the breeding ground) the background of the project has been set up. According to the approved proposal a Project management company (Consulex Ltd.) was selected through a competitive tender process to help the work of the Project manager employed by the CB (Béla Tokody, dr.). Partnership agreements have been signed, reporting templates have been developed and distributed among beneficiaries. The operational project team has been established, all relevant project staff have been contracted or selected. The role and responsibilities of each project staff have been clarified in the contract of work of each employee already working for the project. The up-to date monitoring of the administrative requirements and technical advancements based on the approval system of unified Annual Working Plans (AWP) and the monthly reports are developed and functioning.

Relevant preparatory actions (A1, A2, A3, A5) started in time. The CB selected the external company responsible for the study establishing the sustainable management of Roller nesting habitats (Action A1.). The evaluation of the potential breeding possibilities offered by natural cavities and woodpecker holes has started. Historical data analysis to assess of existing breeding opportunities of Roller and field works to map their distribution started both in Hungary (BNPD, KNPD, MME) and Romania (Action A2). A joint meeting of 51 Roller specialists and the project employees was held 8-9 November 2014 to establish the long term cooperation and to introduce the project actions to the new project staff (Action A3 and F1). The first planned deliverable, the business plan of the Roller visitor centre (attached in Annex 7.2.) is ready for implementation.

The establishment of all concrete conservation actions started. The equipment necessary for the implementation is already available, or in case of Public Beneficiaries the relevant procurement process started. The necessary permits are either available or are initiated and expected to arrive in time.
Despite the early stage of the project the implementation of some conservation actions already advanced significantly. The most prominent is the management of the riparian forest (Action C3), where the primary activity period is late summer/autumn and early spring. Dalerd Ltd. already started the habitat reconstruction on 105,65 hectares (e.g. elimination of invasive species, soil works) and plantation of saplings on 21,72 hectares. The creation of nesting sites started in Romania (Action C4) with the establishment of 60 new nest boxes for Roller in the project SPAs, where the lack of nests sites hinder totally the breeding of the species. In Hungary the field test of potential artificial nest designs started. To be prepared for the first migratory season this autumn, MME secured the technical background of tracking, signed the contract of cooperation with 4 BirdLife partners (Serbia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Israel) and started the test of loggers in captive environment with *Corvus monedula* specimens in the Zoo of Szeged. Within the framework of C9 Action members of Milvus Group assigned transects to prevent illegal logging of trees.

The monitoring of habitat reconstruction actions started with the selection of the external company responsible for the implementation of baseline surveys (Action D1). Experts of different taxa will start the field work in June 2015 in all project sites.

The first dissemination related activities have already started. KNPD solicited all relevant permits for the reconstruction of the old Visitor Centre building and meanwhile the technical implementation is also started with the tendering of the architect (Action E3). The CB finalized the design of the project boards (Action E4), the same information boards will be delivered in short delay to the beneficiaries for installation. Beneficiaries created the project logo, the project leaflets and the first PR set (Action E5). The individual project web pages of beneficiaries and the new trilingual project website (rollerproject.eu) were set up. The content is updated regularly with actualities of the project (Action E6). In 2015 two press conferences were held about the starting of the project, one by APMSM in Romania, and a second by MME in Hungary (Action E7). The project was presented on the LIFE information day, where we could meet the external monitors and the desk officers of LIFE unit.

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

Despite the budgetary difficulties of APM Satu Mare (see in details below), causing small delay in the first month of 2015, the implementation of the project during the reporting period did not suffer significantly.
There is a team of experienced project staff who gives its best endeavours to implement the project as scheduled, in accordance with the Partnership agreements.
The project progress as expected and the objectives are still viable.

3.3. Problems encountered

The Romanian Ministry of Environment Water and Forest (RMEWF) did not approve the necessary budget for APMSM due to some internal technical problems. APM Satu Mare employed the new staff, started the preparatory activities and organized the opening press conference, but due to the lack of budget, some minor delays occurred in the first month of 2015 (field trips, purchase of equipment and services).
The problem seems to be resolved in short term with the decision of the competent authority and the budget approved on 05.05.2015. as we explain in details under 6.2 of this document.

4. Administrative part

4.1. Description of project management

MME employed the Project manager for Roller LIFE+ (Béla Tokody, dr.). The scientific coordination of the project belongs to the PM, the financial administration to Lilla Barabás, dr. and Eszter Gombos (MME). However, as approved in the proposal the technical management and reporting is helped by an external company. Consulex Ltd. (represented by Péter Palatitz and Zsófia Sümegi) was selected with competitive tender and subcontracted on 17.10.2014 to secure the scheduled implementation of the project.

Technical coordination and communication

Planning: Annual working plan (prepared by the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs, revised by the external company, final version accepted by the Director of CB and the Project Manager)

Monitoring: Monthly task report (prepared by the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs, revised by the external company, final version accepted by the Director of CB)

Reporting: Annual report (prepared by the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs, revised by the external company, final version accepted by the Director of CB and accepted by the Project Manager)

Communication: An internal communication plan and annual agenda of tasks (prepared by the Communication officer and/or the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs, revised by the external company, final version accepted by the Communication director of CB and the Project Manager)

Financial coordination and book keeping

Planning: Annual financial plan (prepared by the Project assistant and the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs in accordance with the technical plans, revised by the Project Assistant of the CB and the external company, final version accepted by the Director of CB and the Project Manager)

Monitoring: Monthly financial reports (prepared by the Project assistant of the CB and ABs, sent to the Project Assistant of the CB.)

Reporting and payment process: Annual Report and payment request (prepared by the Project assistant and the Project coordinator of the CB and ABs, revised by the Project Assistant of the CB and the external company, final version accepted by the Director of CB and the Project Manager). If deemed necessary the payment request is also accepted quarterly with the related financial report.

The management tasks are detailed in the organigramme of the project team under point 4.2.

Partnership Agreements (PA) had been signed between CB and each ABs and submitted in Annex 7.1.

There is a good cooperation among the project partners and the management team, with daily communications between the CB and the external company. Consulex Ltd. provides a consolidated monthly report of technical progresses of all beneficiaries both to the external monitor of the project (András Kovács, NEEMO) and to the CB.

The project staff training was held on 8-9 November, the following site visits and meetings between the management company and the Beneficiaries have been organized:

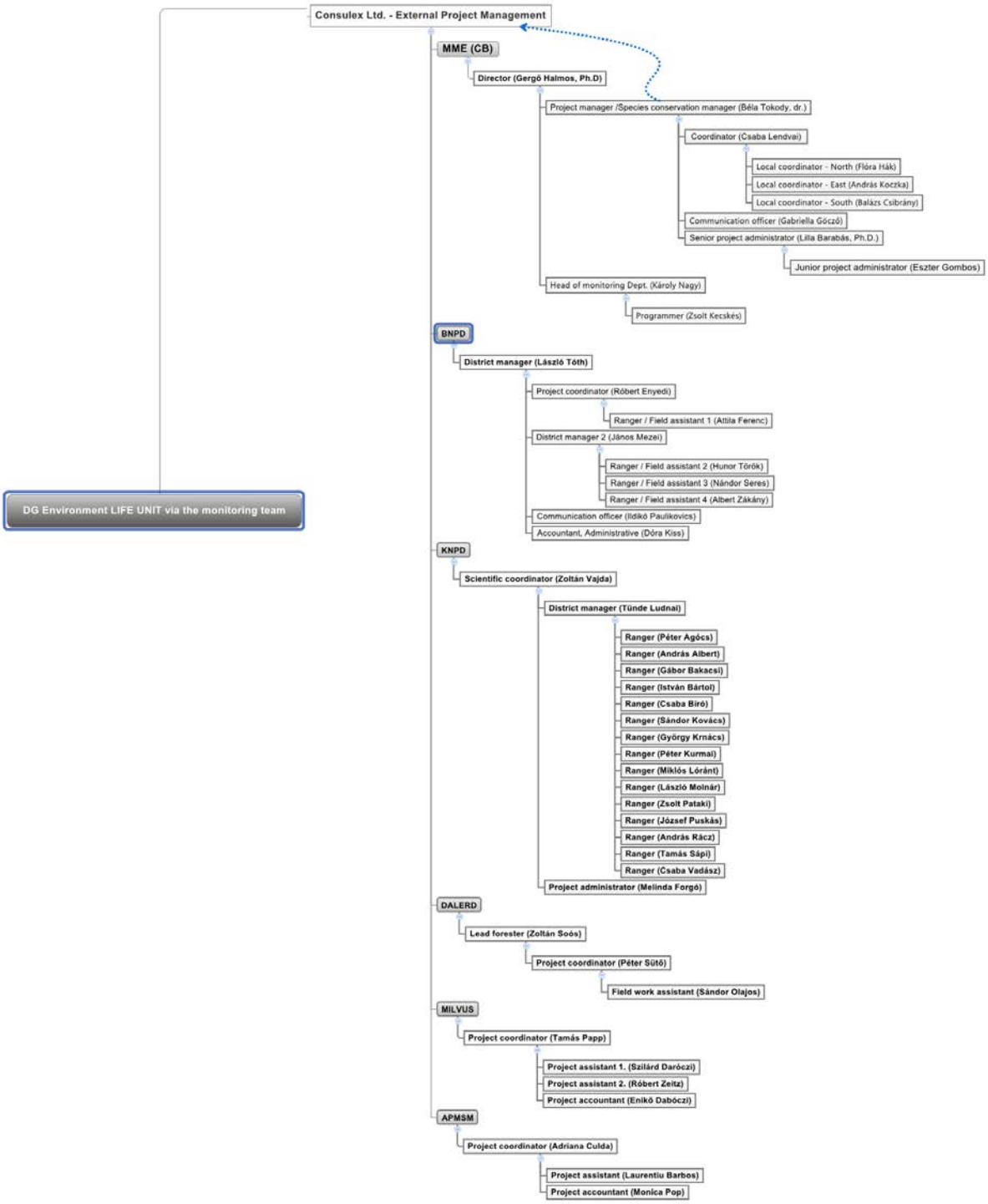
- meeting with APMSM and Milvus Group: 5th November, 2014, Satu Mare, Romania;

- KNPD meeting: 12th November, 2014, Kecskemét, Hungary;
- BNPD meeting: 13th November, 2014, Tepély-puszta, Hungary;
- meeting with Dalerd Ltd. and the auditor 22th January, 2015, MME office Budapest, Hungary;
- Dalerd Ltd. visit 21th April, 2015, Szeged, Hungary.

An independent auditor (Tünde Kolbe) had been selected and the contract had been signed.

4.2. Organigramme of the project team and the project management structure

(for better quality please see Annex 4.2)



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

Bilateral partnership agreements were signed with each beneficiary (date of signature in format DD/MM/YY): BNPD (on 19/08/2014), Dalerd Ltd. (07/12/2012), KNPD (26/09/2012), Milvus Group (14/10/2014), APMSM (12/09/2014).
The agreements are bilingual (English/Hungarian) in case of the Hungarian partners and are in English for Romanian partners (please also find attached the copy of the agreements in Annex 7.1 of this document).
The original agreements include also the following annexes:

- Life+ Nature project proposal (application) document
- Life Special Provisions and Life Nature Common Provisions
- Financial and administrative guidelines
- Financial forms and reporting templates

The Partnership Agreements lay down the budget share of the beneficiaries along with the major rights and obligations. The annexed Financial and administrative guidelines state the type of distribution of the received grants. The distribution can occur as either a.) pre-financing with quarterly advanced payment based on the AWP in case of Milvus Group or b.) post-financing after acceptance of financial reports by CB for BNPD, KNPD and Dalerd Ltd.
Project stamps for every partner were prepared and distributed, which they use in their own accounting. For the first period of the project (between September and December, 2014) one report was asked from the beneficiaries by the end of January, 2015 together with the AWP for 2015. Afterwards a monthly reporting period has been agreed upon, with reporting deadlines set as the 25th day of the following month.

5. Technical part

The last century the overall decline of European Roller population exceeded 30% in three generations. The species disappeared from large historical breeding areas in western Hungary and Romania. Previous conservation actions show that on the breeding grounds the main identified threats can be successfully targeted by conservation actions.
The Roller project targets the population of 17 project SPAs in Hungary, estimated to hold 589-717 breeding pairs in recent years (cca. 60% of the national population). In the Romanian part of the project area 97-137 breeding pairs are known.

The concrete objectives of the ROLLER project are to:
1. Create nesting opportunities for Rollers.
2. Improve nesting and feeding habitats on the three characteristic Roller habitat types on three project sites. Demonstrate the new management methods to owners and managers of key Roller habitats to promote their use.
3. Decrease mortality of Rollers caused by unsafe nesting opportunities and electrocution.
4. Promote the bird friendly habitat management of Natura 2000 sites, prevent especially tree logging.
4. Ensure sustainable and long-term conservation management of the species by the "Farmer for Rollers program" and the creation of National Action Plan (NAP) in Hungary.
5. Increase public awareness of European Roller to strengthen the conservation of the species.

5.1. Actions

Overview of main achievements of the project in the reporting period

Name of the Milestone	Action code	Deadline (planned)	Deadline (accomplished)	Deliverable/ Milestone/ Report
Business Plan is delivered by the subcontractor	**A.5**	**28.02.2015**	**28.02.2015**	**Deliverable**
Project website online	**E.6**	**31.01.2015**	**31.01.2015**	**Milestone**
Signed Partnership Agreements and Financial Guidelines	**F.1**	**31.10.2014**	**31.10.2014**	**Deliverable**
AWP of Beneficiaries	**F.1**	**31.12.2014**	**31.12.2014**	**Milestone**
Contract of the auditor	**F.4**	**31.12.2014**	**31.12.2014**	**Milestone**

Notes: *To facilitate the transparency and the understanding of the current advancement of the project, we provide information about the overall status of each action compared to the schedule approved in the application. The meanings of different categories are:*

"Status: not relevant, start date"= the action is not starting until the next reporting date
"Status: preparatory phase, in time"= the action is not started yet, but will start until the next reporting date, therefore some preparatory activities have been made
"Status: ongoing, in time"= the action is started and running as planned
"Status: ongoing, small delay"= the action is delayed, but the implementation is underway and this do not affect the expected results
"Status: delayed" =the action is delayed, the achievement of expected results is uncertain
"Status: accomplished"= the action is finished and achieved the expected results

A.1 Establish the sustainable management of Roller nesting habitats

Status: ongoing, in time

In Hungary: all the works will be subcontracted to an external company. The company had been chosen with a three-quotations selecting process.

In Romania: as preparation of the action before the monitoring season gathering of old data and coordinates of known woodpecker cavities started. The target areas were also selected for the further survey regarding the breeding sites quality (evaluation of the potential breeding possibilities offered by natural cavities and woodpecker holes).

A.2 Assessment of existing breeding opportunities

Status: preparatory phase, in time

In Hungary: The overall methodology of data collection has been set up, the field work started. The database expected to be finished and delivered by 15/10/2015. Data analysis, assessment of known breeding opportunities and old nestboxes started at BNPD. KNPD replaced all the dangerous old nestboxes in their project area.

In Romania: assessment of habitat conditions, collecting coordinates of old nestboxes started.

A.3 Elaborate National Action Plan for the species

Status: ongoing, in time

MME staff organized a preliminary meeting between 8th and 9th November 2014 in Szatymaz under action F1 which was open for all conservation specialists from the breeding area of the species.

A.4 Elaborate monitoring schemes and training of participants

Status: ongoing, in time

CB started consultations with ABs about the first field season (see annex 7.3/A4).

A.5 Develop the business plan for the sustainable management of the Roller Visitor Centre

Status: accomplished

The preparation of the business plan of the Visitor Centre has been subcontracted to an external company in November after a three-quotations selecting process. After several meetings and consultations the business plan is ready (see deliverable at annex 7.2/A5). The propose measures of the plan will be taken account in the Visitor Centre's operation.

C.1 Restoration of steppe habitats

Status: ongoing, in time

In February KNPD started the preparation and concertation of planned field works with the local directorate of water management (ATIVIZIG). Quotations for geodesy surveys arrived in April; application for the declaration of trustees from the local directorate of water management (ATIVIZIG), contract signed with the subcontractor.

C.2 Restoration of wooded pastures

Status: preparatory phase, in time

BNPD started the preparation of public procurement processes.

C.3 Management of riparian forest

Status: ongoing, in time

Dalerd Zrt. started the works as planned.

The elimination of invasive bushes started in November 2014 (injection of herbicides, clearcutting of the planned sites) after the related modification of the forestry plan. The procurement of major equipments (cars, optics, computers, Seppi, driller, Stihl products) advance as scheduled in the proposal.

The contract was signed with a subcontractor for the planned fieldworks. There was progression in the planned preparatory works such as elimination of invasive trees, cleaning the area and planting of native trees (see annex 7.3/C3).

The following works had been finished by 31.05.2015:

Action	**Művelet**	**hektár/ hectares**
Elimination of invasive species (Parthenocissus vitacea)	Vadszőlő irtás	6,01
Elimination of invasive species (Rubus fruticosus)	Szeder irtás	7,03
Injection of herbicide to the trunk of invasive trees	Injektálás	5,39
Slush herbicides on the bark of invasive tree species	Kéregkenés	15,52
Cutting invasive trees	Kitermelés	19,22
Clearing the cutting area	Terület letakarítás	19,22
Mowing	Terület kaszálás	3,31
Extraction of trunks and roots	Tuskózás	2,5
Deep soil work	Földmunka	0,3
Soil preparation works	Teljes talajelőkészítés	2,5
Plantation (handwork)	Kézi ültetés	19,22
Plantation (machine work)	Gépi ültetés	2,5
Herbicide treatment of new growth (offshoots) of invasive species	Sarjak vegyszeres kezelése	not relevant
Hoeing and mowing (handwork)	Sorközápolás gépi	10,3
Hoeing and mowing (machine work)	Sorközápolás kézi	14,35

C.4 Create nesting sites

Status: ongoing, in time

However this action starts only in January 2016 some preparatory actions occurred already. BNPD started the procurement of equipments (annex 7.3/C4). MME prepared tests of the plastic nestboxes on *Corvus monedula* individuals at the Zoo of Szeged with a research permit from the National Inspectorate For Environment and Nature. Milvus Group created 60 new artificial nest sites on project SPAs.

C.5 Plantation and maintenance of forest patches

Status: ongoing, in time

As preparation Milvus Group started collecting coordinates of suitable places for tree planting.

C.6 Farmers for Roller Program

Status: ongoing, in time

The project logo is ready (see annex 7.3/C6), BNPD started the procurement of planned equipments.

C.7 Insulate dangerous pylons

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.02.2015.

As preparation of this action Milvus Group started collecting coordinates of dangerous pylons to insulate during other fieldworks.

C.8 Reveal threats during migration/wintering

Status: ongoing, in time

The planned contracts about checking the stopover sites and assessing the threats with the BirdLife partner NGOs signed (Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, BirdLife Cyprus, Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, Bird protection and study society of Serbia).

In parallel an intensive communication started with the Spanish colleagues (BirdLife Spain and Dr. Aviles) about the experiences of PTT deployment on Roller.

The planned PTTs had been procured from Microwave Telemetry Inc. (10 pcs) and their tests are also under preparation on the *Corvus monedula* individuals at the Zoo of Szeged with permission from the National Inspectorate For Environment and Nature.

Minor modification: The procurement of PTTs in Hungary will be managed by MME and the related amount has to be moved to the budget of CB, despite to split these between partners (KNPD and BNPD). This unique equipments has to be ordered from one specialized company from the USA, complicating the public procurement process of the PTTs in case of public beneficiaries. The CB and ABs therefore agreed to keep together in MME budget the import of the devices, as this solution will secure the scheduled implementation of the action.

C.9 Control activities to identify and proceed against illegal logging

Status: ongoing, in time

Milvus Group started field surveys on the potential study and monitoring areas. 4 transects were assigned where the illegal logging and the impact will be monitored during the project. During the fieldwork we designate the length of transects we appreciated enough long to cover a significant part of each area with the most suitable Roller habitats. We took picture about all the solitary trees, tree lines, tree patches and floodplain sections and we counted all the relevant and suitable trees.

D.1 Monitoring of habitat reconstruction actions

Status: ongoing, in time

GPS loggers (15 pcs) had been procured from Ecotone Telemetry and MME started to prepare their testing on *Corvus monedula* individuals at the Zoo of Szeged with permission from the National Inspectorate For Environment and Nature.

Minor modification: The procurement of GPS bugs in Hungary will be managed by MME and the related amount has to be moved to the budget of CB, despite to split these between partners (KNPD and BNPD). The reason is the same as described in action C8.

D.2 Monitoring of Roller population

Status: not relevant, start date: 2018.

D.3 Assess the socioeconomic impact of the project actions

Status: ongoing, in time

In Romania: the questionnaires are ready and the contract with the subcontractor signed.

D.4 Monitoring of the electronic pylon insulation

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.07.2015.

E.1 Demonstration of foraging habitat management techniques for stakeholders

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.01.2016.

E.2 Prevent tree logging on Natura 2000 sites

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.01.2016.

E.3 Roller Visitor Centre

Status: ongoing, in time

In November 2014 the project team started the acquisition of the necessary permits for all relevant activities (monitoring, habitat reconstruction – e.g. the elimination of dykes, canals and *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, and building watchtower, Visitor Centre, educational trail etc.).
KNPD started the procurement process to select the responsible architect for the works.

E.4 Produce and erect notice boards

Status: ongoing, in time

In Hungary: the procurement of the notice boards started, the graphical design is ready (see annex 7.3/E4).
Minor modification: The planning of graphical design and the realization of 70x100 cm posters were moved from each Hungarian Beneficiaries to the CB. This cost effective solution help us to keep deadlines and uniformity of the project on each project SPA. The minor budget change has been documented accordingly. Beneficiaries will ensure the raising of notice boards and provide the necessary wooden poles as planned in the proposal.
In Romania: 20 locations for notice boards had been chosen, the procurement is in progress.

E.5 Produce communication materials

Status: ongoing, in time

First set of PR materials, educational toys and the general project demonstrating leaflet had been procured (annex 7.3/E5). The PR sets contain:

PR set for Roller project	Nr. Of ordered items
mug	200 pc
T-shirt	830 pc
Polar sweater	200 pc
pencil, pen	2000 pc
linen bag	500 pc
backpack	70 pc
baseball hat	140 pc
fridge magnet	2000 pc
pinbadge	2000 pc
leaflet	25000 pc (Hungarian)+ 3000 pc (English)
sticker	50000 pc
roll-up	8 pc
poster	1000 pc

E.6 Develop and maintain project website, produce Layman's report

Status: ongoing, in time

The trilingual central webpage of the project is ready: http://rollerproject.eu/ and the Facebook site is also online (https://www.facebook.com/rollerproject). We have reached already 1169 users (2640 page views) and got 803 likes. They are updated regularly with news in all languages.

All beneficiaries prepared one page on their own sites to show their role in the REDFOOT project:

BNPI: http://bnpi.hu/oldal/szalakota-vedelme-a-karpat-medenceben-476.html

KNPI: http://knp.nemzetipark.gov.hu/a-szalakota-vedelme-a-karpat-medenceben-life13-nat-hu-000081-2

Milvus Group: http://milvus.ro/Hu/conservarea-dumbravencei-coracias-garrulus-in-bazinul-carpatic/7238

APMSM: http://www.anpm.ro/web/apm-satu-mare/programe-proiecte

Dalerd Ltd.: http://www.dalerd.hu/aktualitasok.html

(See a collection of screenshots in annex 7.3/E6)

E.7 Ensure continuous media coverage of the project

Status: ongoing, in time

2 press conferences were held about the starting of the project:

- APMSM held a press conference on the 26th of March (annex 7.3/E7/APMSM);
- MME held a press conference in Ópusztaszer on the 22th of April (annex 7.3/E7/MME).

Selection of an external company for the project film started.

E.8 Technical communication of project results

Status: ongoing, in time

The project had been demonstrated on the Kick-off Meeting at 11th November, 2014 in the Ministry of Rural Development, Budapest.

E.9 Update the International Species Action Plan

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.07.2017.

E.10 Promote bird friendly electric pylon design

Status: not relevant, start date: 01.07.2015.

F.1 Overall project operation and management

Status: ongoing, in time

The project management team participated to the kick-off meeting in November, 2014 (see presentation as annex 7.3/F1); working contracts has been signed for the most relevant project positions, the project management company started the regular visit of the beneficiaries:

- meeting with APMSM and Milvus Group: 5th November, 2014, Satu Mare, Romania;
- meeting with KNPD: 12th November, 2014, Kecskemét, Hungary;
- meeting with BNPD: 13th November, 2014, Tepély-puszta, Hungary;
- meeting with Dalerd Ltd. and the auditor 22th January, 2015, MME office Budapest, Hungary;
- visiting Dalerd Ltd.: 21th April, 2015, Szeged, Hungary.

MME staff organized the planned workshop between 8 and 9th November 2014 (see annex 7.3/F1). Altogether 51 specialists participated from Hungary, Romania and Serbia sharing their experiences and knowledge about the species and working out the future cooperation.

In January, 2015 all beneficiaries finalized the annual working and cost plans, the project management company approved and unified the plans. This internal documents detail the information necessary for the implementation of all relevant actions for the Beneficiaries in form of an excel table /tasks, responsibles, indicators, source of verification/. Hopefully the easy to use tables will help the implementation, the follow up and the reporting of the project. Consulex Ltd. receives the monthly reports from all the Beneficiaries and provide the consolidated version to the external monitor and to the PM of the project.

F.2 Developing an After-Life Conservation Plan
Status: not relevant, start date: 01.01.2019.

F.3 Networking with other projects
Status: not relevant, start date: 01.01.2016

F.4 External audit
Status: ongoing, in time
An independent auditor had been selected and the contract had been signed.

5.2. Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

Dalerd Ltd. has permits for all activities linked to action C3.
(Csanytelek 1 A, 1 B, 1 I, 3 B, 3 D, 3 TN1 és Baks 14 C erdőrészletek területén fásszárú növények vegyszeres kezelésének helyt adó határozata. Ügyiratszám: 40280-2-4/2014. Érvényességi idő: 2019. december 31.
Csanytelek 1 A, 1 B, 1 I, 3 B, 3 D, és Baks 14 C erdőrészletek erdőtervi előírásának módosító határozata a pályázatban megjelölt fahasználatok végrehajtásának érdekében. Ügyiratszám: BKG/01/06534-8/2014.)

Pending, submitted permissions:

- **KNPD:**
  KNPD asked for permission for elimination of old artificial ditches, dam system and destroying *Eleagnus angustifolia* groves linked to action C1. They also submitted their permission request linked to the Roller Visitor Centre (action E3).

- **Milvus Group:**
  The only activity that is subject to licensing is the nestbox mounting. Milvus Group asked for permission from the Lunca Mureșului Natural Park and received verbal permission. During the project they will have a long term partnership with this natural park's administration and will have a general written permit as well.

- **MME**
  MME has permission for testing tags on *Corvus monedula* individuals in the Zoo of Szeged. The research permit for all of the monitoring activities has been submitted to the National Inspectorate For Environment and Nature is under revision, therefore still pending. The process does not hinder the implementation of the planned activities. (Update: The permit was approved on 05.06.2015.)

Until the reporting date the lack of licenses and authorisations did not obscured/hindered the implementation of the project.

5.3. Envisaged progress until next report

- **Overview of main achievements of the project as planned in the proposal until the next report (31.03.2016)**

Name of the Milestone	Action code	Deadline (planned)	Deliverable/ Milestone/Report	Main responsible(s)
Habitat maps of study sites	A.1	31.10.2015	Milestone	MME, Milvus Group
Database about suitable habitats for nestbox mounting and existing cavities for breeding in western Romania	A.2	31.10.2015	Milestone	Milvus Group
Database on existing Roller nestboxes in the Hungarian project SPAs	A.2	31.10.2015	Milestone	MME, BNPD, KNPD
Handbook of nestbox installation methods	A.2	30.03.2016	Deliverable	MME
Study on the potential range expansion of the species in Hungary	A.2	30.03.2016	Deliverable	MME
Monitoring plan	A.4	31.13.2015	Deliverable	BNPD
Monitoring training of participants	A.4	31.03.2016	Milestone	MME, APMSM
End of investment phase of the habitat restoration	C.1	29.03.2016	Milestone	KNPD
Plantation of trees	C.2	31.03.2016	Milestone	BNPD
Elimination of invasive trees	C.3	01.09.2015	Milestone	Dalerd Ltd.
Plantation of trees	C.3	31.03.2016	Milestone	Dalerd Ltd.
Selecting of habitats and property issues clarified	C.5	31.03.2016	Milestone	BNPD, KNPD, Dalerd Ltd., APMSM, Milvus Group
Database of powerlines selected for nestbox installation in western Romania	C.7	31.08.2015	Milestone	Milvus Group, APMSM
Database of trees recorded on the selected routes	C.9	31.12.2015	Milestone	APMSM, Milvus Group
Survey 1. results available in Hungary	D.4	07.12.2015	Milestone	MME, KNPD, BNPD
Project boards erected	E.4	30.09.2015	Milestone	MME, BNPD, KNPD, Dalerd Ltd., APMSM, Milvus Group
First set of deliverable PR materials produced	E.5	31.12.2015	Deliverable	MME, APMSM
Conflict map of bird electrocutions	E.10	31.03.2016	Deliverable	MME, KNPD
AWP of the Beneficiaries	F.1	31.12.2015	Milestone	MME
Progress report	F.1	31.03.2016	Report	MME

- Gantt chart of the project:

Action code	Action short name	Action status	2014 III.	2014 IV.	2015 I.	2015 II.	2015 III.	2015 IV.	2015 I.
	ROLLER - LIFE13NAT/HU/000081 Gantt chart - date	Project start: 01/09/2014	Achieved						
	OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS (REPORTING SCHEDULE)	planned	Inception				Progress		
		achieved	Inception				Progress		
A.	Preparatory actions								
A.1	Establish the sustainable management of Roller nesting habitats	planned	x	x	x	x	x	M	x
		in time	x	x	x	x			
A.2	Assessment of existing breeding opportunities	planned	x	x	x	x	x	M	D
		in time	x	x	x	x			
A.3	National Action Plan	planned				x	x	x	x
		in time		x	x	x			
A.4	Elaborate monitoring schemes and training of participants	planned	x	x	x	x	x	D	M
		in time	x	x	x	x			
A.5	Roller Visitor Center business plan	planned	x	x	D				
		in time	x	x	D				
C.	Concrete conservation actions								
C.1	Restoration of steppe habitats	planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	M
		in time	x	x	x	x			
C.2	Restoration of wooded pastures	planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	M
		in time	x	x	x	x			
C.3	Management of riparian forest	planned	x	x	x	x	M	x	M
		in time	x	x	x	x			
C.4	Create nesting sites	planned							
		not relevant							
C.5	Plantation and maintenance of forest patches	planned				x	x	x	M
		in time				x			
C.6	Farmers for Roller Program	planned			x	x	x	x	x
		in time			x	x			
C.7	Insulate dangerous pylons	planned					M	x	x
		not relevant							
C.8	Reveal threats during migration/wintering	planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		in time	x	x	x	x			
C.9	Control activities to identify and proceed against illegal logging	planned			x	x	x	M	x
		in time			x	x			
D.	Monitoring								
D.1	Monitoring of habitat reconstruction actions	planned				x	x		
		in time				x			
D.2	Monitoring of Roller population	planned							
		not relevant							
D.3	Assess the socio-econ. impact	planned	x	x				x	
		in time	x	x					
D.4	Monitoring of the electric pylon insulation	planned					x	M	
		not relevant							

	ROLLER - LIFE13NAT/HU/000081 Gantt chart - date	Project start: 01/09/2014								
			Achieved							
Action code	Action short name	Action status	2014		2015					
			III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	
E.	Public awareness									
E.1	Demonstration of foraging habitat management techniques for stakeholders	planned			x				x	
		not relevant								
E.2	Prevent tree logging on Natura 2000 sites	planned							x	
		not relevant								
E.3	Roller Visitor Center	planned			x	x	x	x	x	
		in time			x	x				
E.4	Notice boards and educational trail	planned		x	x	x	M			
		in time		x	x	x				
E.5	Communication materials	planned				x	x	D		
		in time				x				
E.6	Project website, Layman's report	planned	x	x	M	x	x	x	x	
		in time								
E.7	Continuous media coverage	planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
		in time								
E.8	Technical communication	planned	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
		in time	x	x	x	x				
E.9	International Species Action Plan	planned								
		not relevant								
E.10	Bird friendly electric pylon design	planned					x	x	x	
		not relevant								
F.	Overall project operation									
F.1	Project operation and management	planned	x	M	x	x	x	M	x	
		in time	x	M	x	x				
F.2	After LIFE Conservation Plan	planned								
		not relevant								
F.3	Networking	planned							x	
		not relevant								
F.4	External audit	planned	x	M	x	x	x	x	x	
		in time	x	M	x	x				

6. Financial part

VAT status:

APMSM informed the Project Management that their VAT status should be different than it was previously indicated in the proposal (Annex 7.5.1). The annexed document refers to a letter received from the Romanian Ministry of Environment Water and Forests (the main authority of the APMSM) (Annex 7.5.2). They argue that the activities of the Beneficiary are not connected to "public authority" duties, the LIFE project activities are not included in the deed of foundation (or in any other legislation) as activities in which the Beneficiary would be engaged as public authority and therefore do not fall within the exclusive responsibility of the organization. For this reason, we ask that the VAT connected to the project costs of APMSM would be considered as eligible.

(We are aware that the total eligible budget of the Beneficiary is not subject of change due to this issue).

6.1. Putting in place of the accounting system

Project partners have established their own separate system for managing finances exclusively for the project. Every beneficiary uses a definite code which ensures that these costs are easily tracked within the accounting system.

There is severe emphasis on controlling, as checking wouldn't happen only by Associated Beneficiary internally, but between the AB and the CB. All relevant documentation is checked monthly or quarterly by the CB's project administrator. It is responsibility of all beneficiaries to guard the original financial documentation and send official copies to the CB (except in case of the time sheets, where CB asks for originals). Incurred costs of project partners are approved by CB only if all relevant documents are provided along with the technical reports or other technical document (deliverables, technical annex etc.) that are requested by the project management. Financial sources are distributed in accordance with the Annual Working Plan and budget.

Work time registration systems had also been set up or adjusted to comply with LIFE's regulations. Partners use day-to-day paper-based time-sheets to keep track of worked hours – action codes on which the person is working also need to be marked on the sheets. Validation of time sheets is done by the program coordinator (or by the direct supervisor in case of the coordinator himself/herself).

All costs connected to the project undergo a 3-steps approval system. The first and second steps are the local program coordinator and the responsible person at the financial department. The third step is the control check at the CB.

6.2. Continued availability of co-financing.

In Hungary:
The necessary amount of co-financing, which was planned in the application's budget, is directly transferred on a yearly basis by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture to the concerned beneficiaries (i.e. national park directorates).

In Romania:
In early February 2015, following approval of the budget MMAP (principal loan) and that the ANPM (secondary loan) and subordinated Agencies, the budget for APMSM (tertiary authorizing officer), was approved by the amount 0.0 RON for 2015. In this context APMSM seemed to be unable to timely implement the activities specified in the project. Successive notifications were submitted secondary authorizing officer (NEPA) for to remedy the situation in a shortest time.
Satu Mare Environmental Protection Agency (APMSM), as associated beneficiary in the project ROLLER (LIFE13 NAT/HU/000081), in accordance with the common provisions LIFE, sent by letter no. 3124/27.03.2015, the coordinating beneficiary (MME) official information on this matter.
Given the above reason, until 31.03.2015 APMSM could not cover its project expenses. However, project activities will be recovered in the second quarter of 2015, because on 05.05.2015 the co-financing MMAP finally approved the budget for the project on the first two quarters of 2015. As for the co-financing during the third and fourth quarters this year, there will be a budget revision in the autumn.

6.3. Costs incurred

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 31.03.2015 in €	% of total costs
1. Personnel	1 393 555	80 029	5,74%
2. Travel and subsistence	374 950	15 524	4,14%
3. External assistance	1 355 395	71 504	5,28%
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure	181 120	0	0,00%
Equipment	700 615	345 379	49,30%
Prototype	0	0	
5. Land purchase / long-term lease	0	0	
6. Consumables	609 630	30 181	4,95%
7. Other Costs	114 648	2 382	2,08%
8. Overheads	316 184	34 374	10,87%
TOTAL	**5 046 097**	**579 372**	**11,48%**

As shown in the table above, during the first 7 months of project implementation we have incurred 11.48 % of total project costs. Whilst this is lower than what we might expect at this stage of the project (even dough only 10% of the project time is over, the cost categories are mostly behind the phased budget), there are 2 reasons for this apparent underspending:

1) National parks could not start acquisitions of work equipment during the last 4 months of 2014, as co-financing and public procurement processes both have been approved only from the beginning of 2015.

2) The lack of co-financing - described in 6.2. - resulted in the fact that APMSM could not start the procurements of necessary equipment before the end of May, 2015.

Personnel cost:
Recruitment of new project staff has been undertaken successfully.

Slight changes occurred in the employment set-up compared to the original proposal. However, these changes do not affect the budget, nor the work time input.

- At MME the project administrator position is shared between a senior project administrator (working earlier exclusively on another LIFE project) and a less experienced junior project administrator with 50-50% of their work time. (This turned out to be a very valuable and cost-effective arrangement for both LIFE projects concerned.)
- At Milvus Group 2 full-time project staff had been planned originally. As field work often requires at least 2 persons, the positions have been split among 3 employees. The project coordinator could receive 37.5% of the available personal cost and 2 project assistants (an administrative and a field assistant) get 31.25%-31.25% respectively.

Travel and subsistence cost:

Travel cost is at 4.14% as the high season for field work starts only in May.

External assistance:

The overwhelming part of this cost category (more than 48 000 euros) consists of forestry services under Action C3 (such as cutting invasive tree species, soil work, planting saplings etc.).

Durable goods:

Infrastructure:

BNDP has budgeted tree plantation works under external assistance (€ 279 300) and nestboxes under consumables (€ 30 000) in the original proposal. According to the National Park's accountants, these costs should be categorized under infrastructures to comply with current Hungarian accounting rules. Since both procurements will be implemented exactly as planned, these would not alter the original goals, nor the indicated budget of the project. We ask if this purely technical change in categorization should imply an amendment to the project budget due to major change between the cost categories or this situation can be exempted.

Equipment:

Acquisition of project equipment is in progress. The expenditure is almost at 50% and public body partners (including APMSM) have all started the necessary procurement processes.

One desktop computer and 2 laptops were approved in the proposal, however one more laptop and an additional monitor were necessary for the persons working exclusively for the project. The additional equipment has been procured for Balázs Csibrány who started working as new employee 01.04.2015. (field assistant and manager of the Roller Visitor Centre).
Milvus Group: the beneficiary prefers to purchase one field scope instead of the approved two binoculars, as the first serves better the planned work (colour ring recovery needs major resolution).

Consumables:

At present most of the consumables spend has been incurred on producing the project dissemination materials (€ 12 676), buying the ornithological rings which will be used throughout the whole project (€ 8 349) and purchasing seedlings for plating forest patches (€ 6 583).

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
Action A1 Sustainable management of nesting habitats	78 814	4 862	73 952	78 814
Action A2 Assessment of existing breeding opportunities	84 675	18 533	66 142	84 675
Action A3 National Action Plan	24 735	536	24 199	24 735
Action A4 Monitoring schemes and trainings	15 212	2 337	12 875	15 200
Action A5 Business plan for the Roller Visitor Center	3 000	3 012	-12	3 012
Action C1 Restoration of steppe habitats	180 144	110	180 034	180 144
Action C2 Restoration of wooded pastures	148 000	0	148 000	148 000
Action C3 Management of riparian forests	574 670	240 189	334 481	574 670
Action C4 Create nesting sites	515 115	105 205	409 910	515 115
Action C5 Plantation and maintenance of forest patches	571 633	1 064	570 569	571 633
Action C6 Farmers for Rollers Program	268 408	37 056	231 352	268 408
Action C7 Insulate dangerous pylons	84 495	0	84 495	84 495
Action C8 Reveal threats during migration/wintering	330 415	21 774	308 641	330 415
Action C9 Proceed against illegal logging	67 552	4 354	63 198	67 552
Action D1 Monitoring of habitat reconstruction actions	137 735	23 993	113 742	137 735
Action D2 Monitoring of Roller populations	162 281	129	162 152	162 281
Action D3 Assess socioeconomic impact	2 350	0	2 350	2 350
Action D4 Monitoring of the electric pylon insulation	20 376	0	20 376	20 376
Action E1 Demonstration of habitat management techniques	38 790	0	38 790	38 790
Action E2 Prevent tree logging on Natura2000 sites	88 830	0	88 830	88 830
Action E3 Roller Visitor Center	271 870	5 781	266 089	271 870
Action E4 Notice boards and educational trail	118 175	2 929	115 246	118 175
Action E5 Produce communication materials	80 900	19 603	61 297	80 900
Action E6 Project website, Layman's report	47 200	2 785	44 415	47 200
Action E7 Ensure media coverage of the project	55 000	2 840	52 160	55 000
Action E8 Technical communication of the results	23 890	391	23 499	23 890
Action E9 Upgrading the International Species Action Plan	18 245	0	18 245	18 245
Action E10 Promote bird friendly pylon design	40 200	71	40 129	40 200
Action F1 Project management	650 553	47 319	603 234	650 553
Action F2 After-Life conservation plan	0	0	0	0
Action F3 Networking with other projects	11 650	127	11 523	11 650
Action F4 External audit	15 000	0	15 000	15 000
Overheads	316 184	34 374	281 810	316 184
TOTAL	**5 046 097**	**579 372**	**4 466 725**	**5 046 097**

7. Annexes

7.1. Partnership agreements

7.2. Deliverables

- Marketing and business plan of the Visitor Centre (A.5)

7.3. Technical annexes

7.4. Output indicator tables

7.5. Financial and administrative annexes

4.2. Organigramme of the project team and the project management structure