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FINAL Report – TECHNICAL PART
Covering the project activities from 01/09/2011 to 31/05/2016

Reporting Date
27/09/2016

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
SIMARINE-NATURA

Project Data

Project location	SLOVENIA
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Project end date:	28/02/2015 Extension date: 31/05/2016
Total Project duration (in months)	56 months (including Extension of 15 months)
Total budget	474.458 €
Total eligible budget	€
EU contribution:	€
(%) of total costs	
(%) of eligible costs	

Beneficiary Data

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List of abbreviations

ADRIAWET – Adriatic Wetlands for Natura 2000
ADRIPLAN – Adriatic Ionian maritime spatial Planning
ARSO – Agencija Republike Slovenije za okolje (Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia)
BLI – BirdLife International
BSPB – Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds
CFP – Common Fisheries Policy
DOPPS – Društvo za opazovanje in proučevanje ptic Slovenije (DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia)
ESAS – European Seabirds at Sea
EMFF – European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EU – European Union
EC – European Commission
GPS – Global Positioning System
GSM – Global System for Mobile Communications
HOS – Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife Greece)
IBA – Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
KPS – Krajinski park Strunjan (Landscape Park Strunjan)
KPSS – Krajinski park Sečoveljske Soline (Landscape park Sečovlje Salina)
LIPU – Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (BirdLife Italy)
MOP – Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor (Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning)
MSF – Marine Strategy Framework
MSFD – Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP – Maritime Spatial Planning
MTF – (BirdLife International) Marine Task Force
MZZ – Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NETCET – Network for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic
NRŠZ – Naravni rezervat Škocjanski zatok (Škocjanski zatok Natural Reserve)
NUMO – Načrt upravljanja z morskim okoljem (Management plan for the marine environment)
POSOW – Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions
PR – Public Relations
PUN2000 – Operativni program upravljanja z območji Natura 2000 v Sloveniji 2015–2020 (Natura 2000 Management programme for Slovenia for the period 2014–2020)
RS – Republika Slovenija (Republic of Slovenia)
SPA – Special Protected Area
SPEA – Society for the Study of Birds
TV – television
UP FAMNIT – Univerza na Primorskem, Fakulteta za matematiko, naravoslovje in informacijske tehnologije (University of Primorska, Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technologies)
URSZR – Uprava Republike Slovenije za zaščito in reševanje (Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief)
ZRSVN – Zavod Republike Slovenije za varstvo narave (Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation)
ZZRS – Zavod za ribištvo Slovenije (Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia)
WBDB – World Bird and Biodiversity Database
WWF – World Wildlife Fund

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Project objectives and key outputs

The overall project objective was to improve conservation of the Mediterranean Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*) in the Slovenian sea. Several specific objectives were set to achieve this goal: 1) to improve the conservation status of crucial areas for protection of Mediterranean Shags, including roost-sites and foraging areas (Natura 2000 designation), 2) to improve knowledge about population dynamics, distribution and ecological demands of Mediterranean Shag in Slovenian sea, 3) to establish basis for coordinated management in the project area through involvement of stakeholders, 4) to raise public knowledge and awareness about the conservation of marine environment, and 5) to elaborate a protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled birds.

The main outputs of the project are:

- A scientific study about population dynamics, distribution and the diet of Mediterranean Shags (actions A and C.1)
- Identified and confirmed IBAs for the Mediterranean Shag (actions C.1 and C.2)
- A proposal for new marine SPAs for the Mediterranean Shag (action C.3)
- Management guidelines for Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag (action C.3)
- A protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled wild birds ("oil spills protocol") (action C.6)
- General dissemination materials (poster, children's book, leaflet, standing posters, documentary) (actions D.1 and D.6)
- Technical manual with management guidelines and the description of "oil spills protocol" (action D.2)
- Presentations and excursions carried out for schools and universities (action D.3), and general public (action D.9)
- Publications/broadcastings in media (actions D.4 and D.9)
- A project web page (action D.5)
- Layman's report (action D.7)
- Project notice boards (action D.8)
- Workshops for the stakeholders carried out (action D.10)
- After-LIFE conservation plan (action E.5)

Two key objectives of the project were not achieved by the project end:

- To prepare a proposal of a plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 sites (action C.4)
- To prepare and harmonize a proposal for the decree on Natura 2000 sites (action C.5)

2.2 Administrative issues

The project was implemented in partnership of DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia (coordinating beneficiary) and two associated beneficiaries: the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (MOP) and Public institute Landscape park Strunjan (KPS).

The project started on 1.9.2011 and ended on 31.5.2016. The project end date was postponed twice: from 28.2.2015 to 31.8.2015 (for 6 months) according to the Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement, and by 31.5.2016 (for another 9 months) according to the Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement. The reason for the first postponement was a substantial delay in the implementation of action A.2 (Telemetry of Mediterranean Shags) due to failure of GPS loggers in the second year of the study. The reason for the second prolongation was substantial delay in the implementation of action C.3 (Official SPA proposal) and subsequent actions C.4 and C.5, due to hesitation of MOP (associated beneficiary) to designate the new marine SPAs based on the IBAs identified in this project.

Partnership agreements with the associated beneficiaries were signed in early stage of the project, and were later annexed due to double project prolongation. Co-financing agreements were also signed with all four co-financers (Port of Koper d. d., Municipality of Koper, Municipality of Izola and Municipality of Piran).

The project staff consisted of Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1, Conservation ornithologist 2, Oil spills coordinator, Education and PR officer, Project administrator, Director, MOP senior assistant and Promotion (KPS) assistant. The project manager was responsible for planning and coordinating project activities, communication with project staff, as well as reporting to the DOPPS's Executive Board, External monitoring team and the European Commission.

2.3 Technical issues

The technical part of the project can be divided in five stages: 1) research activities as part of the preparatory actions, 2) identification and designation of marine IBAs for the Mediterranean Shag, 3) elaboration of expert SPA proposal and management guidelines for the proposed sites, 4) SPA designation procedure and 5) elaboration of expert guidelines for the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled seabirds.

a. Field research about population dynamics, distribution and diet of the Mediterranean Shag at Slovenia's sea (Actions A.1 to A.4, implemented by DOPPS)

The actions A were implemented to collect key data for the identification of IBAs. The field study was broken down into four sets of activities: 1) monthly monitoring of Mediterranean Shags (and other seabirds) at sea according to ESAS method, conducted from June 2012 to August 2013 (action A.1), 2) GPS telemetry of individual Shags, implemented from May 2012 to September 2014 (action A.2), 3) monthly monitoring of Shags at roost-sites, conducted between November 2011 and November 2013, and a study of roost-sites' characteristics (action A.3), and 4) study of the Mediterranean Shags' diet based on the analysis of pellets, conducted between July 2012 and December 2013 (action A.4). Actions A.1, A.3 and A.4 were successfully within the planned time schedule whereas action A.2 was also successfully completed but with a substantial delay (13 months) due to technical failure and subsequent reclamation of GPS loggers in summer 2013. The delay in implementation of this action resulted in the first project prolongation.

b. Data analysis and identification of marine IBAs (Action C.1, implemented by DOPPS)

In this stage, the data from actions A.1 to A.3 were analysed according to BirdLife International protocol for the identification of marine IBAs¹. The diet analysis from action A.4 was a standalone study, carried out by external assistants (Shoreline, Società Cooperativa). Based on the results of a comprehensive statistical analysis, new marine IBAs were identified. The action was completed with a delay of almost three months, mainly because the protocol for the analysis of the telemetry data (R code) needed to be adapted by external experts from BirdLife International, to meet the needs of specific characteristics of Mediterranean Shag telemetry dataset. The results of the scientific studies from actions A were published in three technical reports (Annex 4, Annex 6, Annex 7). In addition, two scientific articles were produced, two oral presentations were given and two posters were presented at three scientific workshops. Abstracts were published in workshops' proceedings (Annex 9).

c. Designation of IBAs by BirdLife International (Action C.2, implemented by DOPPS and BirdLife International)

In this stage, the proposed IBAs were presented to BirdLife International secretariat and their identification was justified in two skype sessions. The first proposal was revised according to the comments from BirdLife experts. The IBAs were finally confirmed in the beginning of March 2015, and so the action was completed with a delay of two months (the total delay of the IBA/SPA

¹ BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL (2010): Marine Important Bird Areas toolkit: standardised techniques for identifying priority sites for the conservation of seabirds at sea. - BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.

designation process acquired in previous stage was thus shortened from three to two months in this stage). One new off-shore marine IBA (Central Gulf of Trieste / Osrednji Tržaški zaliv) with surface area 7.963 ha and one inshore extension of an existing coastal marine IBA/SPA Debeli rtič with surface area 155 ha (the IBA was renamed to Debeli rtič – Ankaran) were designated. A small correction was also made in the existing IBA Strunjan. The new IBAs were entered into BirdLife's online World Birds and Biodiversity Database (WBDB).

d. Preparation of expert proposal of SPAs and management guidelines (Action C.3, implemented by DOPPS, ZRSVN)

Based on the confirmed IBAs the SPA expert proposal was elaborated by DOPPS staff. The proposal was submitted to ZRSVN and MOP on 5.3.2014. According to the project plan, the ZRSVN should then prepare the official SPA proposal and submit it to MOP by 30.4.2015 but the project implementation was slowed down significantly in this stage because MOP objected to designate the SPAs based on the IBAs designated in previous stage. The problem was not resolved in time for smooth continuation of the project according to planned time schedule therefore another project prolongation was requested to the Commission, and amended with Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement in August 2015. The action deadline was postponed by 30.9.2015. In the meantime, the SPAs management guidelines were produced. ZRSVN finally submitted the official SPA proposal to MOP in November 2015 and this was a crucial milestone to start the official procedure for the designation of new SPAs by MOP (the following actions C.4 and C.5). ZRSVN proposed to designate the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste, but not the extension of the SPA Debeli rtič. In the latter case the objection was made that the extension of IBA was made based on unsystematically collected data, which is true. However, the data clearly show that the area is regularly used by a threshold number of Mediterranean Shags which complies with the IBA criteria.

e. Preparation of the Plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 sites on social and economic conditions and to define appropriate measures for development (Action C.4, implemented by MOP)

The action started roughly two months after MOP received the official SPA proposal from ZRSVN, with a call to potential subcontractors for the elaboration of the socio-economic study to serve as a basis for the preparation of the Plan. The external assistants (ZaVita d. o. o.) were subcontracted in February and the socio-economic analysis was submitted to MOP in the beginning of May 2016. The official proposal of the Plan was then prepared by MOP senior assistant.

f. Preparation of legislative documents (proposal of the Natura 2000 decree) for the designation of SPAs and its interministerial harmonization (Action C.5, MOP)

The legislative documents were prepared after the project end date. The proposal for the completion of the existing Natura 2000 decree and the proposal of the Plan from action C.4 were put into interministerial harmonization and at the same time on public display, on 1.7.2016 for one month, according to the Slovenian legal procedure for adoption of a decree. The SPA proposal is now being discussed between MOP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ) who raised some issues regarding the unresolved national border at sea between Slovenia and Croatia.

g. Designation of SPAs (Natura 2000 sites) (Government of RS)

The designation of SPA Central Gulf of Trieste by the Government will follow interministerial harmonization when successfully completed in previous step. However, two new Natura 2000 sites (SPA Debeli rtič and SPA Strunjan) for the Mediterranean Shag were already designated and the Shag was added as qualifying species to one previously existing site (SPA Sečoveljske soline) during the course of the project (in April 2013). All three sites encompass the Shags' roosting-sites along the coast. They cover 532 ha of sea (= Shag's habitat) in total. These sites were identified in the DOPPS's IBA revision elaborated in 2011, before the start of the project. The sites were justified with the data from the period 2002–2011 when occasional censuses of roost-sites were carried out. Six other seabird qualifying species are included in these sites besides the Mediterranean Shag: Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*), Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Little tern (*Sternula albifrons*), Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), and Black-throated Loon (*Gavia arctica*). The sites and all species were included in the management guidelines, produced in

action C.3 and presented in the technical manual (action D.2). They have also been presented in all dissemination materials.

h. The elaboration of expert guidelines for the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled seabirds

This was an autonomous action (C.6) independent of the SPAs identification and designation procedure. The expert guidelines were elaborated by a group of external experts, coordinated by Oil spills coordinator.

2.4 Dissemination

The dissemination of project results was carefully planned in order to reach the widest possible public of all generations. For this purpose numerous educational, PR and networking activities were carried out as well as promotional and educational materials were produced and distributed. One of the associated beneficiaries, the KPS, played an important supportive role to raise awareness of local public and tourists.

Two promotional materials targeting the widest public were produced (action D.1): a poster about the Mediterranean Shag and Natura 2000 sites in 5.000 copies, which aimed at drawing attention to the project in its early stage. The other was a leaflet (published in Slovenian, Italian and English) which contained concise information about all crucial project results and was thus produced when most project activities were concluded. It was published in 10.000 copies. 81 % and 80 % of posters and leaflets have been distributed by the time of reporting, respectively. The children population was enriched with a picture book about Ari, the Mediterranean Shag, and a supplementary colouring booklet, printed in 2.000 and 3.000 copies, respectively. 81 % of books and 88 % of supplements were distributed by now. The distribution of all publications continues, mainly in the visitor centres of three coastal protected areas. In addition, the leaflet is just about to be sent to roughly 800 DOPPS members with a quarterly magazine Svet ptic (adding 8 % to the distribution rate). Within the scope of action D.1 standing posters about the Mediterranean Shag and conservation of the marine environment in Slovenia were produced additionally, with approval of the Commission. The contents for the posters were taken from an exhibition which was set up in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History as part of outside LIFE activities (in collaboration of the museum, National Institute of Biology and DOPPS) and was standing from 15.2.2014–5.1.2015. The posters have been exhibited in the visitor centre of the Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve and will travel around in the future.

For the professional public as well as relevant stakeholders (users and operators of the marine environment) a technical manual was published (action D.2), containing thorough information about the Mediterranean Shag and other seabirds protected under Natura 2000, management guidelines for the marine SPAs and a description of the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled wild birds. The manual (in Slovenian language only) was planned to be printed in 1.500 copies but during the project the size of target group was re-estimated and the number of copies was halved. In addition, an electronic version was made which can be downloaded from the project website or circulated by email. The link to the electronic version was already sent to all identified stakeholders and was also published in the e-bulletin e-Natura targeted mainly to Slovenian nature conservation professionals; however, the majority of the printed copies were not yet distributed, but a bulk of them is just about to be sent to the stakeholders by ordinary post. The rest will be distributed in the shortest possible time also to libraries, universities, institutes, and at any given occasion to any interested organizations or individuals.

To present the project results a bit more into the detail than on the above mentioned leaflet, a Layman's report was produced in Slovenian and English, according to the LIFE requirements (action D.7). This publication is mainly meant to be distributed in electronic version therefore only 500 copies were printed according to the project proposal. The electronic version can be downloaded from the project web page. The link was sent to the same recipients as the link to the e-version of technical manual. The printed copies were distributed to a few local stakeholders. They are just about to be sent to the rest of them with the technical manual. The rest of the Layman's reports will

be distributed in the visitor centre of the Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve and on other different occasions.

The information about the project was also spread on notice boards which were set up on three locations near the Mediterranean Shags' roost-sites in early stage of the project. The notice boards were planned to be exchanged with new ones at the end of the project, to give the information about the designated Natura 2000 sites. However, the second set of notice boards was not yet printed and set up because they contain a map of Natura 2000 sites, including the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste which was not yet designated. The notice boards have been prepared for printing but the map might still be updated. They will be printed when a consensus about the SPA border will be reached between MOP and MZZ and they will be set up immediately after the SPA designation. Until then the old notice boards will remain in place.

Moreover, a short documentary about the Mediterranean Shag and conservation of the marine environment was produced (in Slovenian, with English and Italian subtitles) (action D.6). It was broadcasted on the national TV three times, reaching over 87.000 people on average (max. 105.000 people). It was broadcasted non-stop at the exhibition in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History, which was visited by about 25.000 people during the course of one year. It was also presented at the "Isola Cinema" film festival in Izola, Slovenia, and broadcasted during different events in the scope of the project, among them at a special project promotional event "Čudovito morje". The video is available on the home page of the project web site <http://simarine-natura.ptice.si> (established in action D.4).

A big emphasis was given on educational activities (action D.3). A youth ornithological camp was organized, attended by 22 young participants (mainly primary school pupils and secondary school students, as well as a few university students) and led by 8 experienced ornithologists. The results of the research by groups were presented to families and local public in a closing event, while a press conference was organized along. Moreover, 19 presentations and 23 field excursions were carried out for primary and secondary schools. The project results were also presented to university students and academicians.

The promotion of the project was boosted by the Landscape park Strunjan (action D.9). They published 7 articles in local media, made 3 TV/radio broadcasts, presented the project and distributed the materials at 5 local fairs, gave oral presentations to local public, promoted the project among park visitors and distributed posters in their visitor centre.

Least but not last, 4 workshops for the stakeholders (one for the owners of shellfish farms only) were organized to present the project and communicate during all crucial stages of the IBA/SPA identification and designation process. The last workshop, planned to present the final results of the project, essentially the socio-economic analysis and the proposal of the Natura 2000 decree was not organized due to substantial delays in the implementation of actions C.4 and C.5. The stakeholders were, however, informed about the public display of the proposals.

2.5 Networking

The project networking activities under action E.3 essentially facilitated actions for the identification of marine IBAs and preparation of management guidelines for the proposed SPAs. Two planned workshops were attended by DOPPS conservation ornithologists, one about the marine IBA identification methodology (at SPEA – BirdLife Portugal) and the other one about GPS telemetry (at ECOTONE, Poland). The project manager attended the LIFE Marine Platform meeting in Madrid in 2015 and a workshop about protecting seabirds in the Mediterranean, organized by BirdLife Malta in the scope of the LIFE+ Malta Seabird Project in November 2015, and shared the results of SIMARINE-NATURA project, especially the information about new IBAs. Both events were a good opportunity to discuss about the issues related to the designation of SPAs. The project manager also attended yearly meetings of the BirdLife International Marine Task Force (MTF), whose mission is protection of seabirds in European seas, as well as several national and regional workshops related to conservation of marine environment. These workshops were a great opportunity to raise awareness about the SIMARINE-NATURA project and share the results among relevant expert public from Slovenia and neighbouring countries, as well as opportunity to contribute to national programmes related to marine environment. These workshops and meetings were also facilitating communication with different stakeholders. Besides meetings in person, we were also networking over email or skype, for example with HOS (BirdLife Greece) (LIFE Project for the seabirds of Greece) and SPEA (BirdLife Portugal). Interconnected with the activities for the preparation of the Protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled birds (action C.6) was networking with the project POSOW.

3 Introduction

The Mediterranean Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*), a fish-eating seabird confined to marine environment, is a subspecies of the European Shag (*P. aristotelis*), listed on Annex I of Birds Directive, Annex II of the Bern Convention and on the list of priority species of Barcelona Convention. It is distributed only in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The Gulf of Trieste, part of which is also the Slovenia's sea, is an important post-breeding area for a large portion of the Adriatic breeding population. It was estimated in the years before the start of the project SIMARINE-NATURA that the post-breeding population at communal roost-sites along the Slovenian coast reaches 2.000 individuals in the summer peak, representing almost 7 % of the entire population of the subspecies. The Slovenian sea was then recognized as a potential Natura 2000 site for the subspecies and the project SIMARINE-NATURA was proposed as a response to this recognition.

The overall objective of the project was to improve the conservation status of the area since only less than 1 % of the Slovenia's sea was covered with protected areas at the time. The project area was covering part of the Slovenia's sea within the Gulf of Trieste, covering approximately 21.800 ha. (Note that the national border between Slovenia and Croatia has not yet been agreed and that the dispute is being resolved in the arbitration process since 2009.) The site is a shallow coastal sea with few sites that exceed the depth of 25 m. The bottom is covered with muddy or sandy alluvial deposits, which may be bare or densely populated by the Slender seagrass (*Cymodocea nodosa*).

The main threats for the targeting species in the project area are:

- unfavourable status of the project area
- lack of knowledge about the population dynamics, distribution and ecology of the Mediterranean Shag
- absence of coordinated management and weak communication between stakeholders
- potential threat of oil and oil derivatives spillage in the marine environment and consecutive occurrence of oiled seabirds
- low level of public knowledge and awareness about the conservation of the marine environment or negative perception of conservation regimes

The following specific objectives were set to address the above listed threats:

- to significantly improve the knowledge about the population dynamics, distribution and feeding ecology of the Mediterranean Shag in Slovenia's sea
- to identify marine IBAs based on the Mediterranean Shag data, according to the standardized BirdLife International methodology
- to make expert proposal for new marine SPAs (Natura 2000 sites) for the Mediterranean Shag based on the identified IBAs
- to elaborate management guidelines for the proposed SPAs
- to prepare a plan to assess the impact of the proposed SPAs on social and economic conditions and to propose proper developmental measures
- to harmonize the SPA proposal and bring it to the stage to be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia
- to elaborate expert guidelines for the preparation of the Protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled birds
- to raise public awareness about the Mediterranean Shag, the conservation of marine environment and the need to protect the Slovenia's sea

The designation of Natura 2000 sites in the marine environment where many different activities take place might be a sensitive issue for some stakeholders, as Natura 2000 is often perceived as a threat to the economic development. According to the Slovene Nature Conservation Act the SPA designation is accompanied by the preparation of a plan to assess the impact of the proposed SPAs on social and economic conditions, and to propose proper developmental measures for the designated sites. The plan seeks to reconcile the human activities in the area with the Natura 2000 conservation objectives.

5 Technical part

5.1 Technical progress – general overview

The technical part of the project can be divided in five stages: 1) research activities as part of the preparatory actions, 2) identification and designation of marine IBAs for the Mediterranean Shag, 3) elaboration of expert SPA proposal and management guidelines for the proposed sites, 4) SPA designation procedure and 5) elaboration of expert guidelines for the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled seabirds

a. Field research about population dynamics, distribution and diet of the Mediterranean Shag at Slovenia's sea (Actions A.1 to A.4, implemented by DOPPS)

The actions A were implemented to collect key data for the identification of IBAs. The field study was broken down into four sets of activities: 1) monthly monitoring of Mediterranean Shags (and other seabirds) at sea according to ESAS method, conducted from June 2012 to August 2013 (action A.1), 2) GPS telemetry of individual Shags, implemented from May 2012 to September 2014 (action A.2), 3) monthly monitoring of Shags at roost-sites, conducted between November 2011 and November 2013, and a study of roost-sites' characteristics (action A.3), and 4) study of the Mediterranean Shags' diet based on the analysis of pellets, conducted between July 2012 and December 2013 (action A.4). Actions A.1, A.3 and A.4 were successfully within the planned time schedule whereas action A.2 was also successfully completed but with a substantial delay (13 months) due to technical failure and subsequent reclamation of GPS loggers in summer 2013. The delay in implementation of this action resulted in the first project prolongation.

b. Data analysis and identification of marine IBAs (Action C.1, implemented by DOPPS)

In this stage, the data from actions A.1 to A.3 were analysed according to BirdLife International protocol for the identification of marine IBAs². The diet analysis from action A.4 was a standalone study, carried out by external assistants (Shoreline, Società Cooperativa). Based on the results of a comprehensive statistical analysis, new marine IBAs were identified. The action was completed with a delay of almost three months, mainly because the protocol for the analysis of the telemetry data (R code) needed to be adapted by external experts from BirdLife International, to meet the needs of specific characteristics of Mediterranean Shag telemetry dataset. The results of the scientific studies from actions A were published in three technical reports (Annex 4, Annex 6, Annex 7). In addition, two scientific articles were produced, two oral presentations were given and two posters were presented at three scientific workshops. Abstracts were published in workshops' proceedings (Annex 9).

c. Designation of IBAs by BirdLife International (Action C.2, implemented by DOPPS and BirdLife International)

In this stage, the proposed IBAs were presented to BirdLife International secretariat and their identification was justified in two skype sessions. The first proposal was revised according to the comments from BirdLife experts. The IBAs were finally confirmed in the beginning of March 2015, and so the action was completed with a delay of two months (the total delay of the IBA/SPA designation process acquired in previous stage was thus shortened from three to two months in this stage). One new off-shore marine IBA (Central Gulf of Trieste / Osrednji Tržaški zaliv) with surface area 7.963 ha and one inshore extension of an existing coastal marine IBA/SPA Debeli rtič with surface area 155 ha (the IBA was renamed to Debeli rtič – Ankaran) were designated. A small correction was also made in IBA Strunjan. The new IBAs were entered into BirdLife's online World Birds and Biodiversity Database (WBDB).

d. Preparation of expert proposal of SPAs and management guidelines (Action C.3, implemented by DOPPS, ZRSVN)

² BirdLife International (2010): Marine Important Bird Areas toolkit: standardised techniques for identifying priority sites for the conservation of seabirds at sea. - BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.

Based on the confirmed IBAs the SPA expert proposal was elaborated by DOPPS staff. The proposal was submitted to ZRSVN and MOP on 5.3.2014. According to the project plan, the ZRSVN should then prepare the official SPA proposal and submit it to MOP by 30.4.2015 but the project implementation was slowed down significantly in this stage because MOP objected to designate the SPAs based on the IBAs designated in previous stage. The problem was not resolved in time for smooth continuation of the project according to planned time schedule therefore another project prolongation was requested to the Commission, and amended with Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement in August 2015. The action deadline was postponed by 30.9.2015. In the meantime, the SPAs management guidelines were produced. ZRSVN finally submitted the official SPA proposal to MOP in November 2015 and this was a crucial milestone to start the official procedure for the designation of new SPAs by MOP (the following actions C.4 and C.5). ZRSVN proposed to designate the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste, but not the extension of the SPA Debeli rtič. In the latter case the objection was made that the extension of IBA was made based on unsystematically collected data, which is true. However, the data clearly show that the area is regularly used by a threshold number of Mediterranean Shags which complies with the IBA criteria.

- e. Preparation of the Plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 sites on social and economic conditions and to define appropriate measures for development (Action C.4, implemented by MOP)

The action started roughly two months after MOP received the official SPA proposal from ZRSVN, with a call to potential subcontractors for the elaboration of the socio-economic study to serve as a basis for the preparation of the Plan. The external assistants (ZaVita d. o. o.) were subcontracted in February and the socio-economic analysis was submitted to MOP in the beginning of May 2016. The official proposal of the Plan was then prepared by MOP senior assistant.

- f. Preparation of legislative documents (proposal of the Natura 2000 decree) for the designation of SPAs and its interministerial harmonization (Action C.5, MOP)

The legislative documents were prepared after the project end date. The proposal for the completion of the existing Natura 2000 decree and the proposal of the Plan from action C.4 were put into interministerial harmonization and at the same time on public display, on 1.7.2016 for one month, according to the Slovenian legal procedure for adoption of a decree. During this stage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ) raised some issues regarding unresolved questions about the border at sea. The Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia are namely in a dispute about their border at sea and in the middle of arbitration process. The SPA proposal is now being discussed between MOP and MZZ.

- g. Designation of SPAs (Natura 2000 sites) (Government of RS)

The designation of SPA Central Gulf of Trieste by the Government will follow interministerial harmonization when successfully completed in previous step. However, two new Natura 2000 sites (SPA Debeli rtič and SPA Strunjan) for the Mediterranean Shag were already designated during the course of the project and the Shag was added as qualifying species to one previously existing site (SPA Sečoveljske soline). All three sites encompass the Shags' roosting-sites along the coast. They cover 532 ha of sea (= Shag's habitat) in total. These sites were identified in the DOPPS's IBA revision elaborated in 2011, before the start of the project. The sites were justified with the data from the period 2002–2011 when occasional censuses of roost-sites were carried out. Six other seabird qualifying species are included in these sites besides the Mediterranean Shag: Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*), Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Little tern (*Sternula albifrons*), Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), and Black-throated Loon (*Gavia arctica*). The sites and all species were included in the management guidelines, produced in action C.3 and presented in the technical manual (action D.2). They have also been presented in all dissemination materials.

- h. The elaboration of expert guidelines for the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled seabirds

This was an autonomous action (C.6) independent of the SPAs identification and designation procedure. The expert guidelines were elaborated by a group of external experts, coordinated by Oil spills coordinator.

5.2 Preparatory actions (field studies)

5.2.1 Action A.1

Standardized boat survey of Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii* in Slovenian sea using ESAS method

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Equipment for monitoring Shags at sea was purchased (2 binoculars, 2 laser rangefinders, and protective clothes for researchers) by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Monitoring methodology was defined and the protocol for at-sea censuses was elaborated by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 16 at-sea censuses were conducted by DOPPS staff, DOPPS volunteers, and external assistant.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Project administrator

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Zavod za vzpodbujanje trajnostnega razvoja in okoljskega usposabljanja (provided boat trips for monitoring birds at sea)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: 30.9.2013

Planned output:

- ✓ To define monitoring methodology: done within original time schedule
- ✓ To conduct monthly ESAS for 1 year and obtain data for the identification of marine IBAs: done within original time schedule
- ✓ To obtain knowledge of seasonal dynamics, distribution and densities as well as behaviour of Mediterranean Shag in the project area and the distribution of other present seabirds: done as part of the data analysis in action C.1

Indicators

❖ Number of completed censuses (data forms in the project archive): 16 conducted / 12 planned
Note that there is a mistake in the number of planned censuses in the monitoring indicators table in the project proposal (action E.2). The correct number is 12 and not 24. The discrepancy was reported in the Inception report from 31.5.2012.

Modifications

- Number of censuses: 12 were planned, 16 were conducted. The modification was reported in the Inception report from 31.5.2012.
- Instead of renting a boat and purchasing fuel, external assistant was subcontracted for providing boat trips for monitoring at sea. Nevertheless, training and obtaining boat licence was still done by one of DOPPS staff because the boat licence was needed for the implementation of the GPS telemetry – for inshore boat rides (action A.2).

Major problems

There were no major problems in this action.

Outside LIFE

There were no outside LIFE activities related to this action.

5.2.2 Action A.2

Individual bird tracking of Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii* using telemetry methods

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Ringing activities were organized: permission for ringing and tagging Shags with GPS loggers was obtained from national authorities (Annex 5). 40 colour rings and 40 metal rings were purchased, ringing schemes were entered, i.e. EURING (www.euring.org) and European colour-ring birding (www.cr-birding.org/) by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 20 GPS loggers were purchased from ECOTONE (www.ecotone.pl) by DOPPS (3) and MOP (17).
- ✓ Method and equipment for catching Shags at sea was developed by DOPPS staff, DOPPS volunteers, and external assistants.
- ✓ Altogether 29 Shags were caught and tagged with metal and colour rings, and GPS loggers by DOPPS staff and external assistants.
- ✓ GPS telemetry data from the tagged Shags were obtained from ECOTONE on-line service (<http://telemetry.ecotone.pl/slovenia/panel/>) by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Technical report was produced by DOPPS staff, with support of BirdLife International. Note that the production of the report was considered as part of action C.1 because it involved complex data analysis.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Project administrator

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Nace Mihelič (helped with the production of traps and catching and tagging Shags with GPS loggers)
- Anja Pitamic (helped with catching and Tagging Shags with GPS loggers)
- Domen Stanič (helped with catching and Tagging Shags with GPS loggers)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: original: 30.9.2013; amended: 31.10.2014 (postponed for 13 months)

The action deadline and consequently project end date were postponed according to the Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014. The reason for the prolongation was that insufficient data were collected due to failure of GPS loggers in summer 2013. The detailed explanation was provided in the project prolongation request from 5.2.2014. The action was successfully concluded within the amended time schedule.

Planned output:

- ✓ To obtain tracking data (movements, feeding and roosting areas) from a minimum of 20 Mediterranean Shags: done within the amended time schedule

Indicators

- ❖ Number of devices tracked and downloaded (data in the directory SIMARINE-NATURA): 29 downloaded / 20 planned; Data from 24 devices were used for the purpose of IBAs identification.

Modifications

- 20 GPS loggers were purchased instead of 40 originally planned, but the ultimate objective of obtaining data from 20 Shags did not change / see explanation in the 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013. Note that several GPS loggers were reclaimed due to failure, resulting in 29 tagged Shags altogether.

- 17 out of 20 GPS loggers were purchased by MOP instead by DOPPS. The explanation was given in the 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013 and also in chapter 6.3 of this report.
- The production of the technical report was considered as part of action C.1 – Compiling and analysis of gathered data for identification of new marine IBAs, because it involved complex data analysis.

Major problems

- Lack of efficient catching method and equipment. Traps were developed by DOPPS staff and external assistants in season 2012.
- Failure of GPS loggers in summer 2013. The loggers were reclaimed. The action deadline was postponed resulting in project prolongation (Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014).
- Sample of tracked Mediterranean Shags was biased due to limited possibilities for catching. Most individuals were caught at one site which they used as daytime resting place (away from communal roost-sites). Because Shags tend to be faithful to their foraging sites for extended periods of time, mostly the local (inshore) foragers were caught (i.e. sampled). Tracking data were thus clearly biased towards inshore areas. Catching success at nocturnal roost-sites (shellfish farms) where individuals from different parts of the sea gather every evening was very low since Shags were very suspicious about the buoys which were equipped with traps and had many other possibilities to choose for roosting (numerous buoys of shellfish farms).

Outside LIFE

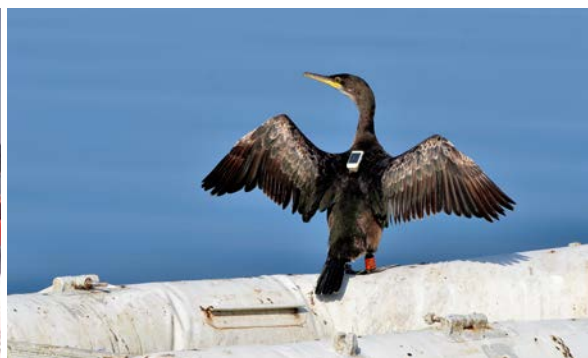
There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ Technical report on the telemetry of the Mediterranean Shags: delivered with the 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014, but it was later revised. The revised version is attached to this report (Annex 4) and is also available on the project web site: <http://simarine-natura.ptice.si/results/deliverables/>

Other annexes:

- ✓ Permission for ringing and tagging Mediterranean Shags with GPS loggers from national authorities (Annex 5)



5.2.3 Action A.3

Estimation of population values and seasonal dynamics census of Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii* by counts on roosts

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Monitoring protocol for evening censuses at roost-sites was produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 24 monthly evening counts at 3 roost-sites were conducted simultaneously by DOPPS staff and external assistants.
- ✓ A study of daily dynamics and roost-site characteristics was conducted by DOPPS volunteers and youth camp participants.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Krajinski park Sečoveljske soline (KPSS) (conducted evening censuses at roost-site in the Landscape park Sečovelje salt pans)
- Domen Stanič (conducted evening censuses at roost-sites)
- Dejan Bordjan (mentor of the youth camp participants)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: 30.9.2013

- ✓ To define counting and monitoring methodology: done within original time schedule
- ✓ To conduct monthly monitoring for 2 years: finished slightly after the action deadline (on 24.10.2013). The delay did not affect any other activities.
- ✓ To conduct a special survey about use of roost-sites by Shags: done within original time schedule

Indicators

- ❖ Number of completed evening counts at roost-sites: 24 completed / 24 planned

Modifications

There were no modifications in this action.

Major problems

There were no major problems in this action.

Outside LIFE

University students (Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana) conducted censuses at communal roost-sites as part of Ornithology practical in summers 2014–2016 (50 students in 6 sessions).

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.



5.2.4 Action A.4

Food analysis of Mediterranean Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Over 500 Shags' pellets were collected at roost-sites by DOPPS staff and external assistants.
- ✓ Pellet analysis was done (including defining the method) by external assistants.
- ✓ Technical report was produced by external assistants.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Shoreline, Soceità Cooperativa (production of the methodology, analysis of pellets and production the technical report)

Volunteers involved in the activities:

- Iztok Škornik (help with collection of pellets in KPSS)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadlines: 30.9.2013 for field work, 31.3.2014 for production of the technical report.

Planned output:

- ✓ To define methodology for the diet analysis: done within the original time schedule
- ✓ To conduct an analysis of the Shag's diet: done within the original time schedule

Indicators

- ❖ Number of analysed pellets: 500 analysed / 500 planned

Modifications

- According to the project proposal the pellets were planned to be collected during the whole year to obtain seasonal dynamics of the Shags' diet. This was not possible because pellets are extremely rare when Shags are present in low numbers (from November to May). Besides, bad weather (rain, wind and high waves) which is more common in cold season dissolves and wipes pellets from the buoys or ground.
- No pellet catchers were set because they were not needed. The pellets are mucous when fresh and they stick on the buoys when regurgitated by Shags.

Major problems

There were no major problems in this action.

Outside LIFE

There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Tables, figures, photos

Included in the Technical report (see deliverables)

Deliverables

- ✓ Technical report on the Mediterranean Shag's diet: delivered with the 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014 (Annex 6)

5.3 Concrete conservation actions (Natura 2000 designation)

5.3.1 Action C.1

Compiling and analysis of gathered data for identification of new marine IBAs

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Electronic database was created by DOPPS staff and a DOPPS volunteer.
- ✓ Data from actions A.1–A.3 was analysed and compiled by DOPPS staff, with help of BirdLife International experts.
- ✓ IBA proposal was made and submitted to BirdLife International by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Methodology for monitoring Shags in the future SPA was elaborated by DOPPS staff (included in After-LIFE conservation plan).
- ✓ One scientific article was published and one manuscript was submitted (in print).
- ✓ Two oral presentations were given and two posters were presented at three scientific workshops, and abstracts published in workshop proceedings by DOPPS staff and external assistants.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2

DOPPS volunteers involved in the activities:

- Ana Dolenc (data entry)
- Dejan Bordjan (production of one scientific article)

External experts (not subcontracted) involved in the activities:

- Lovrenc Lipej, Borut Mavrič and Roberto Odorico (Shoreline, Società Cooperativa) (production of one scientific article and presentation at scientific workshop).

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: original: 31.12.2013; amended: 31.10.2014 (postponed for 10 months)

The action deadline was postponed upon Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014.

Planned output:

- ✓ To conduct scientific analysis of the data collected in actions A: done with a delay of almost 3 months
- ✓ To identify borders of marine IBAs: done with a delay of almost 3 months
- ✓ To define monitoring methodology for the new SPAs: done; included in After-LIFE conservation plan (action E.5)
- ✓ To publish the results in 4 scientific articles: partially done. One article was published within the original time schedule and another one was submitted to journal *Acrocephalus* by the time of final reporting. It is expected to be published by the end of 2016. The results of the scientific analysis of the data from actions A.1–A.3 were published in a technical report “Opredelitev morskih območij IBA za sredozemskega vranjeka (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*) v Sloveniji” (Annex 7). The report will be transformed into two more scientific articles as part of after-LIFE activities. The delay in the production of scientific articles did not affect any other activities.

Indicators

- ❖ Number of scientific studies: 1 published + 1 submitted / 4 planned

Modifications

- The results of the scientific analysis of the data from actions A.1–A.3 were published in a joint report rather than in separate scientific articles. Publishing scientific articles is time consuming

and elaborating a scientific report was more convenient for the purpose of the designation of IBAs. The scientific report from this action was merged with the SPA expert proposal (produced in action C.3) into one technical report (Annex 7).

Major problems

- Complex technical problems occurred in the application of standardized BirdLife International protocol (R code) used for the analysis of the GPS telemetry data. The R code needed to be adapted by BirdLife International experts (see detailed explanation in the 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014). The implementation of the action was thus extended for almost 3 months but the delay was shortened in the subsequent action C.2 – IBAs designation, resulting in cumulative delay of 2 months at the end of action C.2. The delay was not detrimental for subsequent planned activities and it allowed for catching up the schedule in the action C.3 (but see section Major problems in chapter 5.3.3 Action C.3)

Outside LIFE

There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Technical report on the identification of IBAs and SPA expert proposal (Annex 7)
- ✓ After-LIFE monitoring methodology Annex 8
- ✓ Scientific publications (Annex 9)

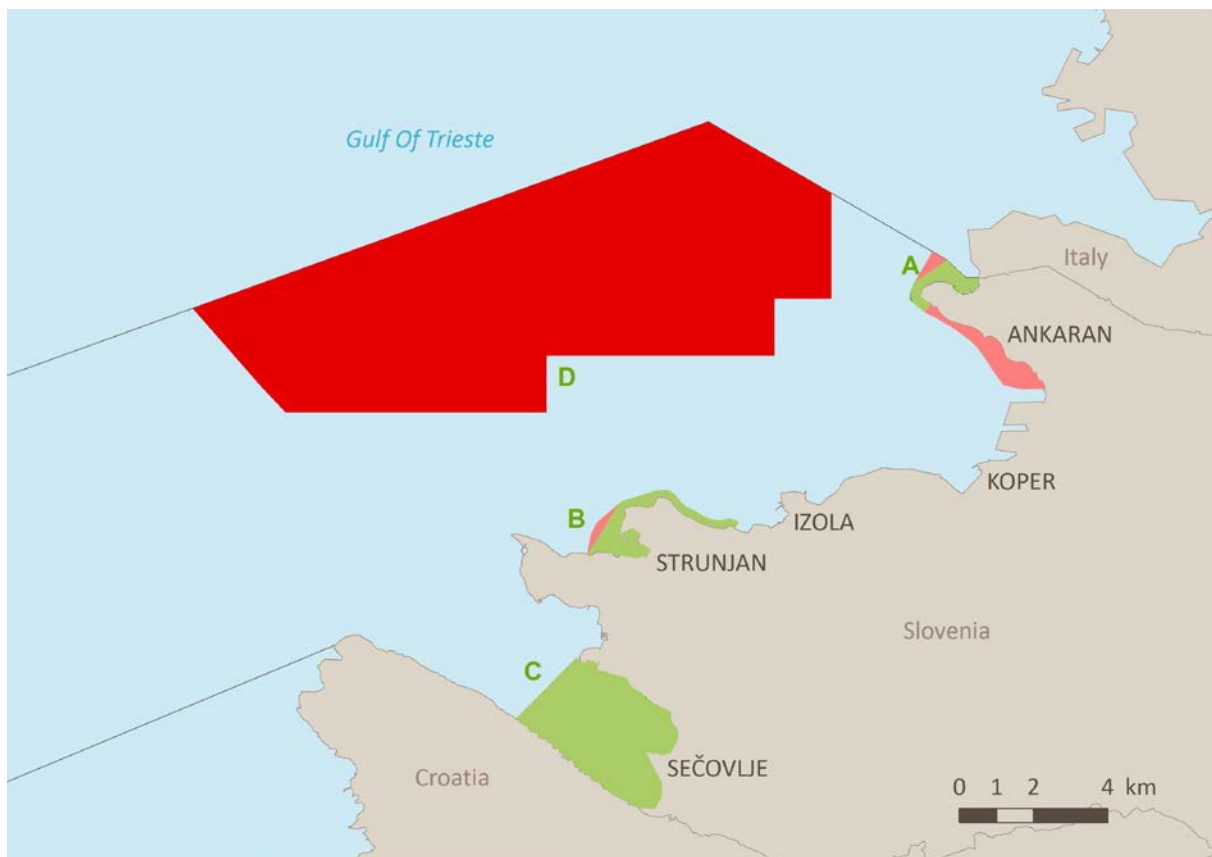


Figure 1. Map of IBAs and their extensions, identified (action C.1) and confirmed (action C.2) within the scope of the project (red) and existing SPAs for the Mediterranean Shag in the Slovenia's sea (green). A: Debeli rtič – Ankaran, B: Strunjan, C: Sečoveljske soline, D: Central Gulf of Trieste. Light red areas were not included in the official SPA proposal by ZRSVN (action C.3, Annex 13).

5.3.2 Action C.2

IBAs designation

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Marine IBAs proposal was submitted to BirdLife International and thoroughly discussed in two skype conferences (11.12.2014 and 5.2.2015) with BirdLife International experts (Maria Dias, Ben Lascelles) and the European Marine Conservation Officer (Marguerite Tarzia) by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Information about proposed marine IBAs was entered into the BirdLife's World Birds and Biodiversity Database (WBDB, www.globalconservation.info) by DOPPS staff and reviewed by BirdLife secretariate.
- ✓ One new IBA (Central Gulf of Trieste) and one extension of an existing IBA (Debeli rtič – Ankaran) were confirmed by BirdLife International, and one proposed area was given a status of an IBA candidate (more data needed to prove that the site meets the criteria for marine IBA).

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1

Competent authorities involved in the activities:

- BirdLife International secretariate

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: original: 31.3.2014; amended: 31.12.2014 (postponed for 9 months)

The action deadline was postponed upon the Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014.

Planned output:

- ✓ To submit the marine IBA proposal to BirdLife International: done within the amended time schedule
- ✓ To designate/confirm the marine IBAs by BirdLife International: done with a delay of 2 months; the IBAs were confirmed on 6.3.2015 (the delay accumulated in action C.1, see the explanation in the section Major problems in chapter 5.3.1 Action C.1).

Indicators

There are no indicators in this action.

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Major problems

There were no major problems in this action.

Outside LIFE

There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ IBA/SPA proposal – shape file (Annex 10)
- ✓ Copies of IBA files from WBDB (Annex 11)

5.3.3 Action C.3

Expert proposal and management guidelines of new marine SPAs

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Expert proposal for the marine SPAs was elaborated based on confirmed marine IBAs by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Management guidelines for the marine SPAs were elaborated and discussed with stakeholders by DOPPS staff and with support/help of ZRSVN.
- ✓ The official proposal for new marine SPAs was elaborated by ZRSVN. One site (IBA Central Gulf of Trieste) was proposed for the designation as an SPA, while the extension of an existing IBA Debeli rtič was not proposed. The ZRSVN argued that the underlying data about the Mediterranean Shags were not sufficient to support the extension of the existing SPA. The detailed argumentation from the ZRSVN's official SPA proposal (Annex 13) can be translated to English on request.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Director

Competent authorities involved in the activities:

- Institute of RS for Nature Conservation (ZRSVN)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: original: 31.3.2014; amended (first): 30.4.2015, amended (final): 30.9.2015 (postponed for 18 months)

The action deadline was postponed twice. The first postponement (13 months) was due to the delay in action A.2 (see above) and the second postponement (another 6 months) was due to unexpected opposition of MOP to designate the SPAs, which resulted in another project end postponement approved by the Commission with the Amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement from 5.8.2015. For the detailed explanation of the problem see project prolongation request from 9.7.2015.

Planned output:

- ✓ Expert proposal for the marine SPAs: elaborated within the first amended time schedule and submitted to ZRSVN and MOP on 5.3.2014
- ✓ SDF form: produced within the first amended time schedule and submitted to ZRSVN and MOP on 5.3.2014
- ✓ Management guidelines for the marine SPAs: elaborated with a delay of 2 weeks according to final amended time schedule.
- ✓ Official proposal for the marine SPAs submitted to MOP by ZRSVN: done with a delay of 1.5 months (submitted on 12.11.2015; on 9.12.2015 – version with technical errata was sent)

Indicators

- ❖ % of expert proposal finished: 100 / 100

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Major problems

- Unexpected MOP's opposition to designate new SPAs for the Mediterranean Shag in Slovenia's sea and consequent unresponsiveness of ZRSVN (who had crucial role in the preparation of the official SPAs proposal and an important supportive role in the elaboration of management

guidelines) caused substantial delay in implementation of the action. Our inability to resolve the problem in time for smooth continuation of the project activities resulted in the second project prolongation, requested on 9.7.2015 and confirmed by the Commission with the Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement from 5.8.2015. See the detailed justification in the project prolongation request.

Outside LIFE

There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ SPAs expert proposal (Annex 7)
- ✓ Management guidelines for marine SPAs (Annex 12)

Other annexes:

- ✓ Official SPA proposal from ZRSVN (Annex 13)

5.3.4 Action C.4

The plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 sites on social and economic conditions and to define appropriate measures for development (socio-economic analysis)

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

Ministry of the environment and spatial planning (MOP)

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Four potential subcontractors were called to submit the offer to elaborate the socio-economic analysis by MOP staff. The call was open from 26.1.2016 to 3.2.2016.
- ✓ External assistant (ZaVita d.o.o.) for the elaboration of socio-economic analysis was subcontracted by MOP staff (contract signed on 17.2.2016).
- ✓ Socio-economic analysis was elaborated by external assistant according to the project proposal plan and contracted demands and submitted to MOP in the beginning of May 2016.
- ✓ The Plan to assess the impacts of proposed Natura 2000 sites on social and economic conditions and to define appropriate measures for development was elaborated and put into the official procedure for adoption by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, by MOP staff.

MOP staff involved in the activities:

- MOP senior expert

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Zavita d. o. o. (elaboration of socio-economic analysis)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadlines: original: 31.8.2014; amended (first): 30.4.2015; amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 16 months)

The action deadline was postponed twice, upon the Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014 (7 months) and upon the Amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement from 5.8.2015 (another 8 months). The second postponement was due to unexpected opposition of MOP to designate the SPAs. See the prolongation request from 9.7.2015 for the detailed justification of the second postponement.

Planned output:

- ✓ A plan to assess the impacts of proposed Natura 2000 sites (new marine SPAs) on social and economic conditions: done with a delay of 4 months according to the final amended deadline. Note that part of the delay (1.5 months) was adopted from action C.3.
- ✓ Developmental measures for sustainable development on Natura 2000 sites: elaborated with a delay of 4 months according to the final amended time. Note that part of the delay (1.5 months) was adopted from action C.3.
- ✓ Adoption of the plan by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia: not achieved by the end of the project.
- ✓ To present the results of the socio-economic analysis at the 4th workshop for the stakeholders and local communities: not done because the workshop was not organized (see detailed explanation in chapter 5.4.2.10 Action D.10).

Indicators

- ❖ % of socio-economic analysis finished (correspondence with contractor, MOP's archive): 100 / 100

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action

Major problems

- The Plan was put into the procedure for adoption by the Government together with the proposal for the Decree on Natura 2000 sites on 1.7.2016 but after 2 weeks the procedure was temporarily

stopped upon the appeal of the Ministry of foreign affairs, due to unresolved questions regarding state border at sea (see detailed explanation in section Major problems of chapter 5.3.5 Action C.5).

Outside LIFE

There were no activities outside LIFE related to this action.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

✓ Socio-economic analysis (Annex 14)

5.3.5 Action C.5

Interministerial harmonization of the SPAs proposal and further official steps for SPAs designation

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

Ministry of the environment and spatial planning (MOP)

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ The proposal to update the Decree on Natura 2000 sites was prepared and put into procedure for adoption by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. SPA Central Gulf of Trieste was proposed to be included in Natura 2000 network according to the official expert proposal from ZRSVN, submitted to MOP in November 2015.
- ✓ Interministerial harmonization and public display started on 1.7.2016 and were due to 1.8.2016 but the procedure was interrupted after two weeks based on political objections from the Ministry of foreign affairs (see further explanation in section Major problems).
- ✓ The coordinating beneficiary was informed about the interruption of the procedure in a letter from MOP from 18.7.2016 (Annex 15) and asked to remove the IBA/SPA expert proposal and the official SPA proposal (Annex 7 and Annex 13) from the project web page until the conflict is resolved / expert proposal corrected. (MOP's argumentation is described in section Major problems.) The documentation was removed upon MOP's request and will be reloaded after the required (and justified) corrections will be made.

MOP's staff involved in the activities:

- MOP senior expert

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: original: 28.2.2015, amended (first): 31.8.2015, amended (final): 31.5.2016 (postponed for 15 months)

The action deadline was postponed twice, upon the Amendment no. 2 to Grant Agreement from 14.4.2014 (6 months) and upon the Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement from 5.8.2015 (another 9 months). The second postponement was due to unexpected opposition of MOP to designate the SPAs based on the IBAs which were identified in action C.1 and confirmed by BirdLife International (action C.2). See prolongation request from 9.7.2015 for the detailed justification of the second postponement.

Planned output:

- ✓ To harmonize the proposal for new marine SPAs: not done by the time of reporting (see section Major problems).
- ✓ To bring proposal for new SPAs to adoption by the Government: not done by the time of reporting.

Indicators

There are no indicators for this action.

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Major problems

- Unexpected opposition of MOP to designate new marine SPAs for the Mediterranean Shag based on the IBAs identified in action C.1 and confirmed by BirdLife International in action C.2. The problem first occurred in March 2015 and was reported in detail in the project prolongation request from 9.7.2015.

Outside LIFE

There were no outside LIFE activities related to this action.

Deliverables

✓ Proposal of the Decree on Natura 2000 sites: not available yet.

Other annexes:

✓ Official correspondence with MOP regarding the SPA designation (Annex 15)

Action C.6

Expert guidelines for preparation of the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and phenomenon of oiled seabirds

Beneficiary responsible for implementation:

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ A working group for the preparation of the protocol, consisting of oil spills coordinator and 5 external experts, was established by the oil spills coordinator.
- ✓ The working group met at six workshops for preparation of the protocol (on 9.7.2013, 11.10.2013, 31.1.2014, 18.3.2014, 25.4.2014, and 6.2.2015).
- ✓ Expert guidelines were elaborated and evaluated by the working group.
- ✓ The oil spills coordinator co-organized two training courses for volunteers for cleaning sea shore and oiled birds in case of oil spills pollution »Oiled shoreline Assessment and Cleanup, and Wildlife response«. They were organized in the framework of project POSOW, on 21.–23.11.2013 in Sežana and Koper, Slovenia, and on 25.–26.5.2016 in Piran, Slovenia.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Oil spills coordinator

External experts (not subcontracted!) involved in the activities:

- A representative of Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil protection and Disaster Relief (URSZR)
- Two representatives of Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (ARSO)
- A representative of Slovenian Maritime Administration
- A representative of Komunala Koper d. o. o. (Koper utility services)
- A veterinarian (Veterinary Clinic Koper)

Comparison with planned output and time schedule

Action deadline: 31.3.2014

- ✓ Expert guidelines for the preparation of the protocol for acting in case of oil spills: done with a delay of 14 months. The delay was a consequence of stretched working plan of the oil spills coordinator after the first prolongation of the project and did not affect any other action or activity. Total working hours did not exceed the originally planned engagement of the oil spills coordinator or any other project staff.

Indicators

- ❖ % of expert guidelines finished (data in the directory SIMARINE-NATURA): 100 / 100

Modifications

- An unplanned activity was carried out: co-organizing two training courses for volunteers (in Sežana and Koper, and in Piran). The courses were organized in the framework of the project POSOW, and the Oil spills coordinator of this project was involved in the organization. She also gave an oral presentation about the oil spills protocol (product of this action) at the courses. Significant media output was gained also for SIMARINE-NATURA project as a result of this cooperation.

Major problems

There were no major problems in this action.

Outside LIFE

- ✓ Participation of the oil spills coordinator at the “Train the trainer course for volunteer management on shoreline assessment, cleanup and wildlife response”, organized in the framework of project POSOW, 21.-23.5.2013, Brest, France

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Expert guidelines for the preparation of the protocol for acting in case of oil spills (Annex 16).



5.4 Dissemination actions

5.4.1 Objectives

The dissemination of project results was carefully planned in order to reach the widest possible public of all generations. For this purpose numerous educational, PR and networking activities were carried out as well as promotional and educational materials were produced and distributed. One of the associated beneficiaries, the KPS, played an important supportive role to raise awareness of local public and tourists.

The following specific objectives were set in the project proposal:

1. To produce general promotional materials:
 - A poster to draw attention of wide public to the project in its early stage;
 - A children's booklet in three languages (Slovenian, Italian, English) to present the Mediterranean Shag to pre-school and early primary school children and also to reach their parents;
 - A leaflet in three languages (Slovenian, Italian, English) to summarize the results of the project in its late stage, as well as to present biodiversity of the Slovenia's sea to wide public;
2. To publish a technical manual (in Slovenian only), containing management guidelines for the Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag and the description of the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled birds, to address the professional public as well as relevant stakeholders (users and operators of the marine environment) in Slovenia;
3. To produce Layman's report in two languages (Slovenian, English) to present the project objectives and results in a popular style and a bit more into the detail than on the above mentioned leaflet;
4. To inform masses of visitors on the coast about Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag by setting up on-site notice boards;
5. To actively spread the word in the local environment, especially in marine protected areas;
6. To produce and broadcast widely a short documentary with attractive natural images and interesting interviews, to educate general public about the Mediterranean Shag, to raise awareness about the need to conserve the marine environment in Slovenia and to promote Natura 2000 in a positive way;
7. To carry out in-class and outdoor educational activities for all generations of scholars, from primary school pupils to university students in order to educate them about the marine biodiversity and importance of Natura 2000 for its conservation, as well as presenting the project results to university students on academic level;
8. To establish communication with relevant stakeholders, to inform them about the designation of new Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag, to involve them in the preparation of the management guidelines for the sites and to facilitate the public acceptance of new Natura 2000 sites;
9. To spread the word through media, as well as on the web page dedicated to the project;

5.4.2 Overview per activity

5.4.2.1 Action D.1

General and promotional materials

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

A – Marine Natura 2000 sites poster

- ✓ Text and graphics for the poster were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Photos for the poster were purchased from external assistants.
- ✓ Graphic design was done by external assistant.
- ✓ Posters were printed in 5.000 copies.
- ✓ Pdf of poster was uploaded on project web page.
- ✓ 4.062 posters were distributed by the time of reporting.
- ✓ The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Education and PR officer

External assistants involved in activities:

- Tone Trebar (photos)
- Duša Vadnjak (photos)
- Bojan Škerjanc (photos)
- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca s. p. (graphic design)

Other services:

- Božnar & Partner d. o. o. (printing)

B – Marine wildlife colouring booklet (children's book with supplement)

- ✓ Text for the book was written by DOPPS employee on a voluntary basis.
- ✓ Text for the book was translated to English and Italian by external assistants.
- ✓ Illustrations were made by external assistant.
- ✓ Graphic design was made by external assistant.
- ✓ Books and supplements were printed in 2.000 and 3.000 copies, respectively (1.500+2.250 in Slovenian, 300+450 in Italian, 200+300 in English)
- ✓ Pdfs of the publication (three lingual varieties) were uploaded on project web page.
- ✓ 1.763 books and 2.417 supplementary colouring booklets were distributed by the time of reporting.
- ✓ The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Education and PR officer
- Petra Vrh Vrezec (author of the text on a voluntary basis)

External assistants involved in activities:

- Kristina Krhin (Matej Supej s. p.) (illustrations)
- Lektoriranje, Mojca Pipan s. p. (lecture of Slovenian text)
- Daniela Milotti (NoVa Film/Video - Riccardo Bertoni s. p.) (Italian translation)
- Itaka, Darja Pretnar s. p. (English translation)
- Primer d. o. o. (Graphic design)

Other services:

- Schwarz print d. o. o. (printing)

C – Marine Natura 2000 sites leaflet

- ✓ Text and graphics for the leaflet were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Photos were donated by DOPPS members and purchased from external assistant.
- ✓ Text for the leaflet was translated to English and Italian by external assistants.
- ✓ Graphic design was done by external assistant.
- ✓ Leaflets were printed in 10.000 copies (7.500 in Slovenian, 1.500 in Italian, 1.000 in English,).
- ✓ Pdfs of leaflets (three lingual varieties) were uploaded on project web page.
- ✓ 7.969 leaflets were distributed by the time of reporting.
- ✓ The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Education and PR officer

External assistants involved in activities:

- Milan Vogrin, zasebni raziskovalec ornitologije in ekologije (photos)
- Lektoriranje, Mojca Pipan s. p. (lecture of Slovenian text)
- Daniela Milotti (NoVa Film/Video - Riccardo Bertoni s. p.) (Italian translation)
- Itaka, Darja Pretnar s. p. (English translation)
- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca s. p. (graphic design)
- Schwarz print d. o. o. (printing)
- Pošta Slovenije (distribution)

D – Marine Natura 2000 sites standing posters

- ✓ Materials for the standing posters were obtained from the exhibition in Slovenian Museum of Natural History (see section 5.4.2.11 Action E.3 – Outside LIFE)
- ✓ Graphic design was done by external assistant.
- ✓ 7 standing posters were produced.
- ✓ Standing posters were exhibited in the Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve Visitor center.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Education and PR officer

External assistants involved in activities:

- Grafično oblikovanje, Anka Doblekar s. p. (graphic design)

Other services:

- PRINTART (printing and production)

Comparison with planned activity

Deadlines for the production of publications:

A – original: 31.7.2012, postponed: 20.11.2012 (postponed for 4 months)

Postponement of deadline for production of poster was requested in Inception report from 31.5.2012 and approved by the Commission in the letter from 6.7.2012.

B – original: 31.3.2012, postponed: 31.8.2012 (postponed for 5 months)

Postponement of deadline for production of children's book was requested in Inception report from 31.5.2012 and approved by the Commission in the letter from 6.7.2012.

C – original: 31.3.2013, amended (first): 30.4.2015, amended (final): 30.9.2015 (postponed for 30 months)

The deadline for production of the leaflet was postponed twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

D – no deadline was set

Production of standing posters was added to the action during the course of the project (see section Modifications).

Was the objective reached?

The publications were produced and the majority was distributed by the time of reporting. The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities. It is expected that the supplies will be exhausted in a few months.

- ❖ 81 % of posters were distributed by the time of reporting
- ❖ 88 % of children's books and 81 % of supplementary colouring booklets were distributed by the time of reporting
- ❖ 80 % of leaflets were distributed by the time of reporting

What were the reactions?

The publications were very well accepted by different groups of people. The children's book was a real success and there were a lot of positive reactions from children as well as their parents and educators. It was advertised in different media, including national press and national TV. A special event "Čudovito morje – Wonderful sea" was dedicated to promotion of the book (and documentary) in Landscape park Sečovlje salina. The posters and leaflets were most popular among school children and teachers as well as visitors of Landscape Park Strunjan in Škocjan Bay Nature Reserve (managed by DOPPS).

Modifications

- Children's book and colouring booklet (as a supplement of the book) were produced in 2.000 and 3.000 copies, respectively, instead of colouring booklet in 3.000 copies. The modification was reported in 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013.
- Production of standing posters was added; the addition was requested in 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014 and approved by the Commission in the letter from 10.2.2015.

Deliverables

- ✓ Poster; delivered with the 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013 (Annex 17)
- ✓ Children's book and colouring booklet in three languages; delivered with 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013 (Annex 18)
- ✓ Leaflet in three languages (Annex 19)

Other annexes:

- ✓ Standing posters – pdf and photo (Annex 20)
- ✓ Report about the distribution of the publications (Annex 28)

5.4.2.2 Action D.2

Targeted technical publications

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Texts and graphics were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Texts were reviewed by DOPPS staff and external experts.
- ✓ Lecture of the text was made by external assistant.
- ✓ Photos were donated by DOPPS members.
- ✓ Graphic design was done by external assistant.
- ✓ Manual was printed in 750 copies.
- ✓ Pdf of manual was uploaded on project web page.
- ✓ The link to the pdf was sent by email to 78 stakeholders and the participants in the project, as well as to the readers of e-Natura bulletin. The link will also be published in the next DOPPS's 'Svet ptic' magazine (to be published by the end of September).
- ✓ The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities (printed copies are just about to be sent to the stakeholders).

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Oil spills coordinator

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Lektoriranje, Mojca Pipan s. p. (Slovenian lecture of the text)
- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca s. p. (graphic design)

Other services:

- Schwarz print d. o. o. (printing)

Comparison with planned activity

Deadline for the production of publication: original: 30.6.2014, amended (first): 30.6.2015, amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 18 months).

The deadline for production of technical manual was postponed twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ 13 % of manuals were distributed by the time of reporting.

Modifications

- One publication in two parts was produced instead of two separate publications (like indicated in the Deliverables table in the project proposal). The modification was reported in the Inception report from 31.5.2012.
- 1.500 copies of the manual were planned in the project proposal but only 750 copies were printed. It was estimated during the course of the project that the target group for this publication is not as large as foreseen in the project proposal.

Deliverables

- ✓ Technical manual (Annex 21)

Other annexes:

- ✓ Report about the distribution of publications (Annex 28)

5.4.2.3 Action D.3 Educational activities

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Youth ornithological camp was organized by DOPPS staff and DOPPS volunteers, attended by .
- ✓ 16 presentations (attended by 349 pupils) and 22 field excursions (attended by 489 pupils) for primary school pupils were carried out by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 3 presentations (attended by 52 students) and 3 field excursions (attended by 61 students) for secondary school students were carried out by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 9 educational events were carried out for university students by DOPPS staff: 3 x presentation (41 participants), 2 x presentation + excursion (25 participants), 1 x excursion (6 participants), 2 x presentation at conferences attended by university students and academicians (128 participants)

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Education and PR officer

DOPPS volunteers involved in the activities:

- Tilen Basle, Dejan Bordjan, Maja Marčič, Matjaž Premzl, Tomaž Remžgar (mentors at the youth ornithological camp)

External assistants involved in the activities:

- OŠ Prade (accommodation for participants of youth ornithological camp)
- Adriatic Slovenia (health insurance for participants of youth ornithological camp)
- Dr. Lovrenc Lipej (presentation at conference)

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: 30.9.2014

The presentations for the university students were carried out with delay. The last one was given in September 2015. The delay was foreseen and explained in 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014 and the deadline postponement was agreed with the Commission in the letter from 10.2.2015.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ To organize a youth ornithological camp: done within planned time schedule.
- ❖ To carry out 10 presentations and 10 excursions for primary school pupils: done more than planned.
- ❖ To carry out 10 presentations and 10 excursions for secondary school students: partially done; compensated with presentations and excursions for primary school pupils.
- ❖ To carry out 6 presentations for University students: done with addition of a few excursions.

What were the reactions?

The reactions were very positive, especially among pupils and university students. Teachers in primary schools were very interested in educational activities, as they fit very well in their teaching programme. However, there was less interest from high schools and this resulted in relatively low number of presentations and excursions carried out for this target group. The youth ornithological camp was a great success, with very good educational and even scientific outcomes, as well as extremely positive socializing effects.

Modifications

- A small number of presentations and excursions for secondary schools (because of lack of interest) were compensated with higher number of presentations and excursions for primary schools. The modification was agreed by the Commission in the letter from 27.10.2014.

Outside LIFE

Educational activities for university students have continued after the end of the project. An excursion and monitoring of roost-sites is included in the Ornithology practical for students of Biology at Biotechnical faculty, University of Ljubljana. Two sessions were given in 2016 (attended by 19 students).

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Presence lists (Annex 29)
- ✓ List of educational activities (Annex 31)
- ✓ Photos from the events (Annex 32)

5.4.2.4 Action D.4

Media work

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ 1 press conference was organized by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 1 promotional event for general public (journalists invited) was organized by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ 3 press releases were done by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Summary of publications and radio/TV broadcasts is given in Tables 1 and 2.
- ✓ Database of publications and broadcasts (excel table, pdf collection) was created by DOPPS staff.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Education and PR officer
- Oil spills coordinator

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: original: 30.9.2014; amended (first): 30.6.2015; amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 15 months)

The action was extended twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

The planned activities and their implementation:

- ❖ 2 press conferences were planned: 1 press conference and 1 promotional event for general public with press conference were carried out. Objective was reached.
- ❖ 6 press releases were planned: less than planned were released (4).
- ❖ 15 articles/news published in national press: less than foreseen were published (6).
- ❖ 15 articles/news published in local press: less than foreseen were published (13).
- ❖ 15 internet news on project web page: more than foreseen were published (65).
- ❖ 5 TV broadcasts: more than planned were made (9).
- ❖ 5 radio broadcasts: less than planned were made (4).
- ❖ Other publications: 8 articles and 26 news were published in specialized magazines, mostly in DOPPS' magazine 'Svet ptic'. 20 news and 2 articles were published on the internet on other than project web pages. 17 news directly related to SIMARINE-NATURA project activities were published in the e-bulletin e-Natura. This monthly bulletin is delivered by email and is also available on the internet. The target group are predominantly nature conservation experts from public organizations such as ministries, agencies, institutes as well as NGOs.

Less than foreseen press releases were made (4 out of planned 6). The remaining two press releases were planned to be made during the SPA designation procedure and at the end of the project to announce the designated SPAs, however, this was not done because of the delays in these activities. This also resulted in lower than planned number of published news in general local and national press.

As presented in Tables 1 and 2 considerably more publications and broadcasts were done in total than planned. We thus consider that the overall objective of informing the widest possible public was reached. Unfortunately it was impossible to assure that publications in media would contain a project and LIFE / Natura 2000 reference. We made an analysis of project and LIFE / Natura 2000 reference use in the publications (articles, news). The majority of publications (92 %) mentioned at least one of the following:

- Full project title (21 % of publications)
- Project acronym (83 % of publications)

- Project code (23 % of publications)
- LIFE or LIFE+ mentioned (46 % of publications)
- EU co-financing claim (29 % of publications)
- LIFE and Natura 2000 logo (20 % of publications)
- Link to project web page (37 % of publications)

However, some publications (8 %) did not contain any references to the project or LIFE co-financing.

Table 1. Number of publications/broadcasts in media by publication/broadcast type and media type (published/broadcasted by 31.8.2016)

Publication/broadcast type	Media type	Number
article	internet	2
	local press	5
	national press	2
	specialized magazine	8
Total articles		17
news	brochure	5
	e-bulletin	17
	internet	20
	internet, email	1
	local press	8
	national press	1
	national press (web edition)	3
	specialized magazine	26
	project web page	65
Total news		146
radio	radio	4
Total radio		4
TV	TV	9
Total TV		9
Total publications/broadcasts		176

Table 2. Number of publications/broadcasts in media by reach category and publication/broadcast type (published/broadcasted by 31.8.2016)

Reach	Publication/broadcast type	Number
international	news	1
Total international		1
internet	articles	2
	news	23
	project web page news	65
Total internet		90
national	articles	10
	news	49
	TV	5
Total national		64
regional-coastal	articles	5
	news	8
	radio	4
	TV	4
Total regional-coastal		21
Total publications/broadcasts		176

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned in this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Press list and cuttings (Annex 30)
- ✓ Press releases and invitations for the press conferences (Annex 22)
- ✓ Photos (Annex 32)

5.4.2.5 Action D.5

Web site of the project

<http://simarine-natura.ptice.si>

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Texts and graphics for the web page were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Texts were translated to English by external assistant.
- ✓ Graphic design was made by external assistant.
- ✓ The web page was created by external assistant.
- ✓ Google analytics profile was created to follow the visiting statistics by external assistant.
- ✓ The web page was regularly updated and developed throughout the project course by DOPPS staff and external assistants.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Education and PR officer

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca (graphic design)
- Uroš Orešič (technical execution)
- Henrik Ciglič (translation of texts to English)
- Itaka, Darja Pretnar s. p. (translation of texts to English)
- Tone Trebar (photos)
- Bojan Škerjanc (photos)

Web page visiting statistics (from 25.5.2012 to 31.5.2016):

- 4.758 page visits
- 2.160 unique visitors
- 17.086 page views (on average 3.6 pages per visit)
- average session duration (m:ss): 2:50

Note that web page visits were not registered from 19.10.-22.12.2014, as explained in 2nd Progress report from 31.12.2014.

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: 31.12.2011

The web page has been active since the end of December 2011.

Was the objective reached?

❖ To create and further develop a project web page: the objective was reached.

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ Project web page: <http://simarine-natura.ptice.si>

5.4.2.6 Action D.6

Production of video-clip on marine Natura 2000 sites

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ The producer of documentary was subcontracted by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ A scenario and plan for filming was made in collaboration of the producer and DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Early in the stage of the documentary production a short video clip about the Mediterranean Shag was produced by external assistant and published on project web page by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ A documentary about the Mediterranean Shag and marine Natura 2000 (in Slovenian and with English and Italian subtitles) was produced by external assistant in December 2014.
- ✓ The distribution and promotion of the documentary:
 - It was immediately shared on the project home page (simarine-natura.ptice.si and simarine-natura.ptice.si/en) and on vimeo (vimeo.com/84434321 and vimeo.com/84481103) by DOPPS staff. The number of project web site views since the inclusion of the documentary (by the time of reporting) was 3.249 by 680 unique visitors.
 - It was shared on DOPPS's and KPS's Facebook page by DOPPS and KPS staff.
 - A media release was made to promote the documentary (together with the children's book) by DOPPS staff and several media reported about it.
 - It was broadcasted at the international film festival "Isola Cinema" (Video on the beach) in Izola, Slovenia, on 4.6.2014.
 - It was promoted at "Čudovito morje – Wonderful sea" promotional event in Landscape park Sečovlje salina on 15.1.2014, organized by DOPPS staff.
 - It was broadcasted non-stop at the exhibition about the Mediterranean Shag and conservation of marine environment in Slovenia, in the Slovenian Natural History Museum in Ljubljana, from 15.2.2014 to 5.1.2015. The estimated number of visitors of the exhibition was 25.000.
 - It was broadcasted three times on the national TV (TV Slovenia): on 29.6.2015 (3,37% share or 68.440 people reached), 8.8.2015 (4,52% share or 87.720 people reached) and on 18.8.2015 (5,41% share or 105.000 people reached).
 - It was broadcasted during three presentations for University students (action D.3).
 - It was broadcasted at two workshops for the stakeholders (action D.10).

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Education and PR officer
- KPS Promotion assistant

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Kawka Production, Gregor Šubic s. p. (production of the documentary)

Comparison with planned activity

Deadline for the production of the video: original: 31.12.2012; postponed: 31.8.2013 (postponed for 8 months)

The deadline for the production was postponed upon our request in the Inception report from 31.5.2012 and in agreement with the Commission (letter from 2.10.2012).

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ To produce a short documentary about the Mediterranean Shag and the marine environment in Slovenia: the video was produced with a delay of 3.5 months according to the postponed deadline.
- ❖ To broadcast the documentary on national TV three times (100.000 people reach): the objective was reached.
- ❖ To develop additional ways of the distribution (additional 50.000 people reach): the objective was not reached. Additional ways of the distribution/broadcasting were used, reaching about 25.100 people.

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ A short documentary about the Mediterranean Shag and marine Natura 2000; delivered on 23.12.2013 as an addition to the 1st Progress report (Annex 23)

Other annexes:

- ✓ Documentary broadcasting history (Annex 24)

5.4.2.7 Action D.7

Layman's report

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Text and graphics for the Layman's report were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Photos were donated by DOPPS members.
- ✓ Text for the leaflet was translated to English by an external assistant.
- ✓ Graphic design was done by an external assistant.
- ✓ Layman's reports were printed in 500 copies (350 in Slovenian, 150 in English).
- ✓ Pdfs of Layman's report (two lingual varieties) were uploaded on project web page.
- ✓ The link to the Layman's report was sent by email to 78 stakeholders and the participants in the project, as well as to the readers of e-Natura bulletin. The link will also be published in the next DOPPS's 'Svet ptic' magazine (to be published by the end of September).
- ✓ About 200 printed reports were distributed by the time of reporting.
- ✓ The distribution continues as part of after-LIFE activities (printed copies are just about to be sent to the stakeholders).

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Lektoriranje, Mojca Pipan s. p. (lecture of Slovenian text)
- Itaka, Darja Pretnar s. p. (English translation)
- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca s. p. (graphic design)

Other services:

- Schwarz print d. o. o. (printing)

Comparison with planned activity

Deadline for the production of Layman's report: original: 30.9.2014, amended (first): 30.6.2015, amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 15 months).

The deadline for production of Layman's report was postponed twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ To produce a Layman's report according to LIFE requirements: the objective was reached. The Layman's report was produced in Slovenian and English and is available in print and electronic version: (<http://simarine-natura.ptice.si/en/results/deliverables/>, <http://simarine-natura.ptice.si/rezultati/produkti/>)
- ❖ To distribute the Layman's report: 40 % of printed copies were distributed by the time of reporting.

Modifications

There were no modifications of this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ Layman's report (SLO and ANG version) (Annex 25)
- ✓ Report about the distribution of Layman's report (Annex 28)

5.4.2.8 Action D.8

Notice boards in project area

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ Text and graphics for info boards (1st and 2nd set) were produced by DOPPS staff.
- ✓ Photos were donated by DOPPS members.
- ✓ Text for the info boards (1st and 2nd set) was translated to English and Italian by external assistants.
- ✓ Graphic design (1st and 2nd set) was done by external assistants.
- ✓ 1st set of notice boards was printed: 3 small boards to mark the offices of beneficiaries, 3 large boards for setting up in the field.
- ✓ 1st set of notice boards was set up in three locations near potential Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shags (roost-sites) by DOPPS staff.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Education and PR officer

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Daniela Milotti (NoVa Film/Video - Riccardo Bertoni s. p.) (Italian translation)
- Itaka, Darja Pretnar s. p. (English translation)
- Primer d.o.o. (graphic design)
- Oblikovanje, Polonca Peterca s. p. (graphic design)

Other services:

- Vidal d.o.o. Grosuplje (printing of info boards – 1st set)
- Argos, Vojko Strahovnik s.p. (production of poles for info boards)

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline:

1st set of notice boards: 31.12.2011

2nd set of notice boards: original: 30.9.2014; amended (first): 30.6.2015; amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 15 months)

The deadline for the production and setting up the 2nd set of notice boards was postponed twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ To set up notice boards in the project area: The first set of notice boards was set up in the beneficiaries' offices and in the field with a delay of a few months as reported in the Inception report from 31.5.2012. The notice boards in the field were planned to be exchanged with new set of boards at the end of the project, containing new information about the designated Natura 2000 sites. The second set of boards to be set up in the field was made ready for printing but they were not printed yet because one of the Natura 2000 sites (SPA Central Gulf of Trieste) was not designated yet and part of its border is still questioned (see explanation in chapter 5.3.5 Action C.5). The new boards contain a map of Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag and thus cannot be printed and set up until the questioned SPA border is finally agreed and the SPA designated. At the moment, the map of Natura 2000 sites contains a proposal of the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste from 2015 which will most probably be changed after the interministerial harmonization (activity in action C.5). Accordingly, the map on the notice boards will have to be changed, too.

Modifications

There were no modifications in this action.

Deliverables

- ✓ 1st set of notice boards – pdf and photos: delivered with the 1st Progress report from 4.12.2013 (Annex 26)
- ✓ 2nd set of notice boards – pdfs (Annex 27)

5.4.2.9 Action D.9

Promotional activities in Strunjan Landscape park

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ The project was promoted among park visitors by KPS staff.
- ✓ An external assistant was subcontracted
- ✓ About 800 posters were distributed to the park visitors and at local fairs by KPS Promotion assistant. The distribution to park visitors will continue until the supplies are finished.

KPS staff involved in the activities:

- KPS Promotion assistant

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Iztok Škornik (production of articles for local press, presentations)

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: original: 30.9.2014; postponed: 30.9.2015

The deadline for the production of one article was postponed until the results of the action C.3 (SPA expert proposal) were available for publication. The postponement was in accordance with the Amendment no. 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ To publish 7 articles in local press: the objective was reached. 6/7 articles were published within original time schedule, one article was published by the postponed deadline. 2 additional articles were published on the web page of Landscape park Strunjan (kpss.si).
- ❖ To make 3 TV or radio broadcasts: objective reached with a short delay of 1.5 months.
- ❖ To present the project and distribute project materials at 3 local fairs: the activities were carried out at 5 local fairs and the objective was reached within original time schedule.
- ❖ To give presentations to general public: 7 presentations were carried out, 4 within original time schedule and another 3 in the first extended project period.
- ❖ To promote the project and distribute posters to the park visitors: these activities were done regularly from April 2013 and are still going on.

Modifications

- Part of the activities were carried out by an external assistant instead of KPS staff: 9 articles published, two radio broadcasts made, and 5 presentations given to the general public. The external assistant was subcontracted, thus part of the Personnel costs were transferred to the External assistance cost category.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Press list and cuttings (Annex 30)
- ✓ Presence lists (Annex 29)
- ✓ List of events (Annex 31)
- ✓ Photos (Annex 32)

5.4.2.10 Action D.10

Obtaining opinion from local communities and informing other stakeholders

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

- ✓ 3 workshops for the stakeholders and local communities were organized by DOPPS staff and MOP staff: 27.11.2012, 6.11.2014 and 23.4.2015.
- ✓ 1 additional workshop for the owners of the shellfish farms was carried out by DOPPS staff. 11.12.2013.
- ✓ Several individual meetings with different stakeholders were carried out by DOPPS staff: with the representatives of fishermen, with owners of shellfish farms, with experts from Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia, with experts from the Institute of RS for conservation of nature, with representatives of the Administration board of Port of Koper, and with leading persons of Morigenos – Slovenian Marine Mammal Society.
- ✓ The project manager was meeting with various stakeholders from fisheries, aquaculture and maritime sectors in the period between February and July 2014 while actively participating in the working group for the preparation of the national Operative Plan for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).
- ✓ When the proposal for the update on Natura 2000 decree and the Plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 sites on socio-economic aspects of local communities was put on public display in July 2016 by MOP, the stakeholders were informed about it by email and encouraged to send their remarks. They also received the link to the Technical manual and Layman's report published on the project web page.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Education and PR officer
- Oil spills coordinator

External assistants involved in the activities:

- Vera Srnec Kovačič s.p. (catering)
- Gostinske storitve Edvin Maršič, s.p. (catering)
- Hitra priprava jedi, Špela Vermuž s.p. (catering)

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: original: 30.9.2014; amended (first): 31.5.2015; amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 15 months)

The deadline of the action was postponed twice, according to the according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ✓ To organize 4 workshops for the stakeholders and local communities: 3 workshops for all stakeholders were organized and one special workshop for the owners of shellfish farms only. The last (4th) foreseen workshop for stakeholders and local communities was not organized because of substantially delayed activities in actions C.4 and C.5. The results of these activities (socio-economic analysis and the proposal for the Natura 2000 decree) were the main focal point of the last planned workshop but they were not delivered in time to organize the workshop before the end of the project. However, the stakeholders were informed by email about the public display of the Natura 2000 decree in July 2016, before it was interrupted upon the appeal from the Ministry of foreign affairs (see explanation in chapter 5.3.5 Action C.5). They also received links to download the technical manual produced in action D.2 and Layman's report. We think that the

overall objective of informing the stakeholders and local communities in all crucial stages of the project, and establishing or strengthening our relation with them was undoubtedly reached despite one missing workshop, also because of individual meetings and email correspondence. Moreover, the official SPA designation procedure will continue after the end of the project and we will take care to inform the stakeholders about the crucial steps through now established correspondence. Also, they will be encouraged to participate in the SPA designation procedure according to their competence.

What were the reactions?

The reactions of stakeholders were diverse, depending on their background. The nature conservation expert public greeted the new IBAs and Natura 2000 establishment at sea well, as there is high level of awareness about the need to protect Slovenia's sea. Some users of the marine environment, especially fishermen and mariculturists are accepting Natura 2000 with unease or are even against it. During the course of the project some became more favourable while others did not. The reaction of Port of Koper was positive, and they had no remarks on the new SPA proposal or proposed management guidelines whatsoever. Some representatives of the MKGP (Hunting and fisheries sector) were at least sceptic if not opposing to new Natura 2000 at sea. Local communities were able to recognize positive impacts of Natura 2000 on social and possibly economic aspects, especially in terms of added value in touristic offer and healthy environment.

Modifications

- One workshop for the owners of shellfish farms was added. The owners of shellfish farms are one of the crucial stakeholders regarding the conservation of the Mediterranean Shags in the Slovenian sea. The Shags depend strongly on shellfish farms which are their major roost-sites along the Slovenian sea. Three Natura 2000 sites were designated in the area of communal roost-sites on buoys of shellfish farms, and some project activities were implemented on the shellfish farms (catching shags in action A.2 and collecting pellets in action A.4). Thus, special attention needed to be given to communication with the shellfish farmers.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Presence lists (Annex 29)
- ✓ List of events (Annex 31)

5.4.2.11 Action E.3

Networking

Beneficiary responsible for implementation

DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia

Activities, implementers and outputs

See Table 3.

DOPPS staff involved in the activities:

- Project manager and conservation ornithologist 1
- Conservation ornithologist 2
- Oil-spills coordinator
- Education and PR officer
- Project administrator

Comparison with planned activity

Action deadline: original: 30.9.2014; amended (first): 31.5.2015; amended (final): 31.12.2015 (postponed for 15 months)

The action deadline was postponed twice, according to the Amendments no. 2 and 3 to Grant Agreement.

Was the objective reached?

- ❖ Knowledge and the experience will be obtained from the beneficiaries of completed and on-going projects with similar contents: the objective was reached
- ❖ Exchanging experience regularly: the objective was reached
- ❖ At least 10 experience exchange contacts via internet or phone per project year: less than 10 per year, but there was intense exchange in 2014/2015 with BirdLife (IBA identification methodology)

Modifications

- A few unplanned activities were carried out (see Table 3).

Outside LIFE

An exhibition in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History about the Mediterranean Shag and conservation of Slovenia's sea was set up in collaboration of the museum, National Institute of Biology and DOPPS. The exhibition was essentially based on the results of the project SIMARINE-NATURA. During the course of almost one year (15.2.2014–15.1.2015) it attracted around 25.000 visitors.

Deliverables

No deliverables were planned for this action.

Other annexes:

- ✓ Photos (Annex 32)



(Projects submitting final reports after 1 January 2014 must use this format.)

Table 3. List of all networking activities. Red – planned in the project proposal; orange – not planned in the project proposal but later agreed with the Commission, white – not planned in the project proposal and implemented without request to the Commission.

ID	Date	Place	Event	Attended by	Activity of the participants	Benefits for action	Travel costs incurred (Y/N)
1	18.-21.12.2011	Lisboa	The IBA identification workshop at SPEA (BirdLife Portugal)	Urška Koce, Katarina Denac	Trained to use the ESAS methodology for censusing seabirds at sea.	A.1	Y
2	12.1.2012	Piran	A stakeholders' workshop for the preparation of national Marine Strategy Framework (MSF)	Urška Koce	Participation in public debate and contribution to the strategy; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	Y
3	17.9.2012	Portorož	A stakeholders' workshop for the preparation of national Marine Strategy Framework (MSF)	Urška Koce	Participation in public debate and contribution to the strategy; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	Y
4	5.-9.4.2013	Wierzba	The ECOTONE GPS telemetry workshop	Urška Koce, Katarina Denac	Trained to apply GPS telemetric devices and use of online database; presenting preliminary results of the GPS telemetry (action A.2) in a poster session; exchanging experience with other users of GPS devices on birds	A.2, C.1	Y
5	14.-15.5.2013	Brussels	BirdLife International workshop about EMFF	Urška Koce	Learning about the EMFF, how NGO's can participate in the preparation of the national Operative Programmes and how it can be used for the purpose of seabird conservation.	E.5	Y
6	30.8.2013	Izola	The MOP workshop about EMFF	Urška Koce	Learning about EMFF on the national level; communication with stakeholders	E.5	Y
7	26.9.2013	Koper	The NETCET course on handling and releasing sea turtles and cetaceans	Urška Koce	Learning about conservation of sea turtles and cetaceans; communication with stakeholders	D.10	Y
8	21.-23.11.2013	Sežana and Koper	The POSOW training course for volunteers "Sea shore and oiled birds cleaning in case of accidental oil spills"	Bojana Lipej, Urška Koce, Nevenka Pfajfar, Bia Rakar	Oil-spills coordinator: co-organizing the workshop, giving presentation about the "Oil spills protocol", communication with stakeholders; Others: participation in the training course. The project manager: communication with stakeholders.	C.6, D.10	Y
9	3.2.2014	Ljubljana	A meeting of the national working group	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the	C.3, D.10,	N

			for the preparation of Operative Programme for EMFF 2014-2020		Operative Programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	E.5	
10	10.2.2014	Ljubljana	A meeting of the national working group for the preparation of Operative Programme for EMFF 2014-2020	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the Operative Programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	N
11	18.3.2014	Ljubljana	The WWF "Financing Natura 2000" workshop	Urška Koce	Learning about the financial sources for Natura 2000 conservation projects	E.5	Y
12	23.4.2014	Ljubljana	A meeting of the national working group for the preparation of Operative Programme for EMFF 2014-2020	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the Operative Programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	N
13	8.5.2014	Ljubljana	A meeting of the national working group for the preparation of Operative Programme for EMFF 2014-2020	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the Operative Programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	N
14	30.5.2014	Koper	A stakeholder workshop for the preparation of Municipal environmental programme in the Municipality of Koper	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	Y
15	7.7.2014	Trieste	The ADRIPLAN "Stakeholder workshop 3"	Urška Koce, Bojana Lipej	Learning about marine spatial planning in the Adriatic region; sharing project results	C.3, D.2, E.5	Y
16	9.7.2014	Ljubljana	A meeting of the national working group for the preparation of Operative Programme for EMFF 2014-2020	Urška Koce	Active involvement in the preparation of the Operative Programme, advocating for the inclusion of the conservation measures related to marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10, E.5	Y
17	19.9.2014	Koper	A national event "The Mediterranean coast day"	Urška Koce, Bojana Lipej	Presentation of "oil-spills protocol"; communication with stakeholders	C.6, D.10	Y
18	3.10.2014	Koper	The AdriaWet "Natura 2000 management	Urška Koce,	Learning about methodology for the preparation of	C.3, D.10	Y

			workshop"	Bojana Lipej, Bia Rakar	Natura 2000 management plans; communication with stakeholders		
19	15.10.2014	Ljubljana	Presentation of the project SIMARINE-NATURA for BSPB (BirdLife Bulgaria)	Urška Koce, Damijan Denac	Knowledge transfer; BLI partner interested in marine IBA identification		N
20	1.-2.12.2014	Brussels	BirdLife International Marine Task Force meeting	Urška Koce	Learning about marine IBA identification and managing; understanding thr sharing preliminary results of IBA identification;	C.1, C.2, C.3, E.5	Y
21	26.-27.3.2015	Madrid	The LIFE Marine Platform Meeting	Urška Koce	Networking with other marine LIFE projects	C.3, E.5	Y
22	18.2.2015	Izola	The KPS seminar "Good practice on co-management of fisheries resources"	Urška Koce	Learning about sustainable fishing practices; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.10	Y
23	12.3.2015	Koper	The UP FAMNIT international workshop "Biodiversity in the Mediterranean basin"	Urška Koce, Lovrenc Lipej (ext. assistant)	Dissemination of project results: oral presentation of Shags' diet analysis, presentation of new marine IBAs (poster); communication with stakeholders	C.1, D.10	Y
24	17.6.2015	Koper	The UP FAMNIT international workshop "Conservation Biology"	Urška Koce	Dissemination of project results: oral presentation of Natura 2000 sites and management guidelines for the Mediterranean Shag; communication with stakeholders	C.1, C.3, D.10	Y
25	1.12.2015	Piran	A stakeholders' workshop for the preparation of national Marine Strategy Framework (MSF)	Urška Koce	Participation in public debate and contribution to the strategy; communication with stakeholders	C.3, D.2, D.10, E.5	Y
26	24.-25.11.2015	Malta	BirdLife Malta workshop "Protecting seabirds in the Mediterranean"	Urška Koce	Dissemination of project results; networking with other projects; preparation of a draft project proposal for Adriatic-Ionian region; consulting about the designation of marine SPAs;	C.5, E.5	Y
27	26.-27.11.2015	Malta	BirdLife International Marine Task Force meeting				Y

5.5 Evaluation of project implementation

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
A.1-1	To define counting methodology for the project survey.	Y	The methodology was successfully defined with help of experts from SPEA (BirdLife Portugal) who have had previous experience in the identification of marine IBAs in their LIFE project "IBAs Marinhas (LIFE04NAT/PT/213)" and were also involved in the development of BirdLife International methodology for marine IBAs identification. The knowledge was transmitted at the networking workshop in Lisbon in December 2011. We also received standardized data forms and detailed description of the method. The contribution of Portuguese colleagues enabled efficient implementation of monitoring at sea (action A.1) in our project.
A.1-2	To conduct monthly boat-counts for 1 year according to ESAS method.	Y	The method was successfully applied and cost efficient. Subcontracting an experienced external assistant who provided boat trips, instead of engaging one of the DOPPS staff in boat piloting, was an efficient modification which also ensured more safety for the team. More than planned surveys were done within the limits of planned budget. However, boat licence was still obtained by one of the DOPPS staff because it was needed for inshore boat trips in action A.2.
A.1-3	To define monitoring methodology for after-LIFE monitoring	Y	This task was defined in the description of action A.1 but it is then repeated in action C.1. Thus, see the evaluation of task C.1-4.
A.2-1	To obtain tracking data from 20 Shags	Y	The data were obtained according to the plan but with substantial delay due to technical failure of the GPS loggers. This was reported in the first project prolongation request from 5.2.2014. Besides this problem, which was successfully solved, there were some limitations in Shag catching. Trapping success at communal roost-sites was very low therefore trapping was more or less limited to one location (a diurnal resting place). During the day, the Shags tend to be faithful to the same foraging areas for extended periods of time, so such limitation in trapping locations resulted in biased sample of tracked individuals. Thus, the tracking data had limited power for the identification of IBAs. Apart from the technical problems with GPS loggers this was the major drawback of the study but this could not be anticipated nor avoided. Nevertheless, even if the tracking data could not be used directly for the delineation of IBAs, it gave important supportive information for the interpretation of other datasets (ESAS, roost-site counts) and undoubtedly strengthened the IBAs proposal. The use of advanced GPS-GSM technology was cost efficient because data download from GPS loggers through GSM

			network was almost 100% reliable and no data were lost during loggers' lifetime. This would not be the case if we used radio download which is cheaper (no GSM fee) but far less reliable. In case of GPS-GSM loggers less devices had to be applied for the same quantity of tracking data, which was especially beneficial for Shags (fewer birds were burdened with tracking devices).
A.3-1	To define counting and monitoring methodology at roost-sites	Y	The methodology was defined and standardized for further monitoring. The results of the future censuses will be comparable with the results of the project censuses.
A.3-2	To conduct monthly monitoring of roost-sites for 2 years	Y	Roost-site monitoring was successfully conducted according to the above mentioned methodology. Cost efficiency was ensured by engaging local ornithologists.
A.3-3	To conduct a special survey on use of the roost-sites	Y	This was done by one group of young ornithologists under supervision of experienced ornithologist (PhD student at that time). This was cost effective and beneficial from the educational point of view (new field assistants were trained for further monitoring).
A.4-1	To define methodology for the diet analysis	Y	The method was defined and presented in the technical report. Referential collection of otoliths was created and can be used in future studies. The results will thus be comparable between studies.
A.4-2	To conduct an analysis of the Shag's diet	Y	The analysis was done by external experts (ichthyologists) based on skeletal remnants of fish in the Shags' pellets. This is a recognized and very accurate method for analysing the diet of Shags, although quite time consuming. The results can be compared to results from other studies. Apart from the technical report one scientific article was written based on the results of the analysis.
C.1-1	To perform scientific analysis of the data from actions A	Y	The analysis was done according to standardized BirdLife International methodology for the identification of marine IBAs. In this regard the results of the study are to some extent comparable to the results from similar studies that applied the same method. However, the analysis of tracking data in our study was complex and demanded involvement of BirdLife experts. It turned out that the BirdLife protocol for the analysis of tracking data, which is used for breeding seabird colonies, needs to be further developed for the case of congregatory non-breeding seabirds such as the Mediterranean Shags. It was quite time consuming to complete this task and a delay of a few weeks was created in this stage.
C.1-2	To identify borders of marine IBAs	Y	The identification of marine IBAs was done according to the standardized BirdLife International methodology. The data obtained from boat-counts according to ESAS methodology proved to be crucial for the identification of IBA Central Gulf of Trieste (covering foraging area) whereas tracking data could only be used as supporting data layer because of biased sampling (see explanation in A.2-1).
C.1-3	To publish 4	Partly	One scientific article was published and one is in press (will

	scientific articles with the results of the studies from actions A		be published by the end of 2016). Publishing scientific articles is very time consuming and for the purpose of justifying the IBAs proposal we presented the scientific results in a joint report. For the purpose of dissemination of the results to the academic public we gave two oral presentations at two international conferences and two posters. The abstracts of these contributions were published in conferences' proceedings. Publication of the remaining two scientific articles will be completed within the scope of after-LIFE activities.
C.1-4	To define monitoring methodology for the new SPAs	Y	The monitoring methodology is basically the methodology which was developed and used in actions A.1 and A.3. However, upon the experience gained during the data analysis, the ESAS transect at sea was slightly modified. The modified transect will simplify the data analysis.
C.2-1	To submit the IBA proposal to BirdLife International	Y	The IBAs proposal was submitted to BirdLife International already in the draft form. BLI experts were involved already in task C.1-1 and thus very well acquainted with the scientific background of the proposal. With their participation in a few skype sessions the draft IBA proposal was refined and finalized.
C.2-2	To have the IBAs confirmed by BirdLife International and entered in the IBA database (WBDB).	Y	The confirmation of IBAs followed naturally the previous stages and was facilitated due to BLI's participation in the process from early stages of the identification.
C.3-1	To elaborate expert proposal for the marine SPAs	Y	Expert proposal for the new SPAs was elaborated and submitted to ZRSVN. It was presented in a joint report with the scientific justification of the IBAs (proposed SPAs).
C.3-2	To elaborate management guidelines for the marine SPAs	Y	Management guidelines were elaborated. During this stage the 3 rd workshop for the stakeholders was organized where the draft of the guidelines was discussed. Several individual meetings with crucial stakeholders were also made. Involving stakeholders in this stage facilitated the production of the guidelines and made them more realistic. With the active involvement of different stakeholders a lot of information was shared that would otherwise be neglected.
C.3-3	To submit the official proposal for the marine SPAs to MOP	Y	At this stage the project was slowed down significantly due to lack of consensus from MOP to designate the SPAs based on the identified (and confirmed) IBAs. The Commission was promptly informed about the situation and the second request for project prolongation was submitted on 9.7.2015. After a few months of hesitation and a few meetings ZRSVN finally decided to submit the official proposal to MOP. In the stage of the preparation of the official SPA proposal ZRSVN asked us for some additions to the expert proposal. In the beginning of December 2015 the proposal was submitted with a delay of 7 months according to the time schedule after the first project postponement,

			and two months according to the last amended time schedule. Nevertheless, this was a crucial step for starting the official SPA designation procedure by MOP that could not be avoided. It was facilitated by open communication between DOPPS and ZRSVN.
C.4-1	To carry out meetings/interviews with relevant stakeholders	Y	The meetings/interviews with relevant stakeholders were carried out by the subcontractor for the elaboration of the socio-economic analysis (apart from the meetings carried out by the coordinating beneficiary). This way the communication with stakeholders was even enhanced.
C.4-2	To produce socio-economic analysis	Y	The production of socio-economic analysis depended on the submission of the official SPA proposal from ZRSVN to MOP (task C.3-3). The socio-economic analysis was done to prepare a "Plan to assess consequences of proposed Natura 2000 on socio-economic conditions and to define appropriate measures for the development", which is according to the national legislation an obligatory addition to the designation of new Natura 2000 sites. The purpose of the plan is to mitigate possible negative impacts of restrictions that come from Natura 2000 regulation and to propose developmental measures to enhance activities with positive impact on socio-economic conditions which at the same time meet the objectives of Natura 2000 sites. This is an important strategic document that contributes to better acceptance of Natura 2000 sites in the local society and politics.
C.5-1	To bring the proposal of the Natura 2000 decree to the stage when it can be adopted by the Government of RS	N	This activity has been substantially delayed. It's been more than 9 months since MOP received the official SPA proposal from ZRSVN. After 7 months (two months after the project end date) the proposal for the Natura 2000 decree was put into interministerial harmonization and at the same time on public display. During this stage the Ministry of foreign affairs raised some issues regarding the unresolved national border question between Slovenia and Croatia. MOP and MZZ will discuss internally to come to a consensus about this issue before the official procedure will continue. It may take a few more months before the SPA will be designated.
C.6-1	To organize six workshops/meetings with the relevant experts competent for issues about oil spills and rescuing oiled birds/animals	Y	The workshops/meetings were necessary for efficient knowledge transfer and information sharing among experts competent for the preparation of the "oil spills protocol".
C.6-2	To elaborate the guidelines for the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills an occurrence of oiled birds/other animals	Y	The guidelines were elaborated in cooperation of experts from different relevant areas of expertise: ornithology, veterinary service, environmental protection, civil protection and disaster relief, maritime administration, and maritime transport. The cooperation was effective and it resulted in a high quality document which complies with the administrative requirements for inclusion in the

			national Plan for civil protection and disaster relief in case of maritime accidents. The inclusion will be implemented as part of after-LIFE activities.
D.1-1	To produce a poster (5.000 copies)	Y	The posters were produced in the early stage of the project and were very effective to draw attention to the project activities.
D.1-2	To publish a children's book in three languages (SLO, ITA, ENG) (3.000 copies)	Y	The production of a book with a story instead of only a colouring booklet was a very positive modification. The book was very warmly welcomed. The Mediterranean Shag belongs to the Cormorant bird family which often has negative reputation among people due to their fish-eating habits. Reaching the children and their parents with a lovely story about Ari, the Mediterranean Shag, added substantially to creating positive attitude towards Shags. A story which is based on true natural history of the Mediterranean Shags also has an important educational value. The book definitely deserves to be reprinted and possibly translated to Croatian language (part of the story is happening in Croatian waters).
D.1-3	To produce a leaflet in three languages (SLO, ITA, ENG) (10.000 copies)	Y	The leaflet which can expand into a poster is a concise and picturesque presentation of the project results on one side, and the Mediterranean Shag and other Natura 2000 species in the Slovenian sea on the other side. It is meant for the widest general public of all generations and was effectively distributed to local residents by post in over 6.000 copies.
D.1-4	To produce standing posters (7 posters)	Y	The standing posters were produced by modifying the panels used at the exhibition about the conservation of the Mediterranean Shag and marine environment in Slovenia which was held in the Slovenian Natural History Museum in Ljubljana. The transformed exhibition will travel around the country which is an effective way of presenting it to different target groups in the other than central region of Slovenia. At the moment the posters are exhibited in the Visitor center of the Škocjanski zatok Natural Reserve (coastal region).
D.1-5	To distribute the publications	Partly	The distribution of all publications started shortly after they were produced. Several effective distribution channels were used: by post, at school presentations, in visitor centres of coastal protected areas (incl. Italy), at local fairs, at the British Birdwatching Fair 2014, in DOPPS premises, in libraries, by a bookstore agent; however, the supplies were not exhausted yet. The distribution continues on daily basis in three protected areas on the coast: Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve (managed by DOPPS), Landscape park Strunjan and Landscape park Sečovelje salina. There are also other occasions for the distribution (different events and visits of partners). At the rate the publications are being distributed the supplies should be exhausted within a couple of months.
D.2-1	To publish a technical manual	Y	750 copies were printed upon the re-estimation of target group size during the project. The manual is also available in

	(1.500 copies)		electronic form and can be downloaded from the project web site which is a very efficient way of distribution at no extra cost.
D.2-2	To distribute the manual	Partly	The manual in electronic form was sent to 78 stakeholders by email and it was shared with expert public over the e-bulletin e-Natura. About 100 printed copies were already distributed, about 150 copies are just about to be posted to all stakeholders in the database which we created during the project. The rest will be distributed to libraries, universities, institutes and other interested individuals or organizations identified in the course of the after-LIFE activities.
D.3-1	To organize a youth ornithological camp	Y	The long tradition of ornithological youth camps organized by DOPPS that attracted dozens of young people over the years leave no doubt that this is one of the most effective ways to “fish” for future ornithologists and nature conservationist or simply to leave a mark on young people that will become decision-makers at different levels of their professional or personal lives. 22 young people aged 10 to 20 were exploring marine environment and its hinterland. One group conducted a study on characteristics of Mediterranean Shags’ roost-sites under supervision of an experienced ornithologist and researcher. The study was published in the DOPPS’ scientific journal <i>Acrocephalus</i> .
D.3-2	To carry out presentations and excursions for primary schools (10+10)	Y	There was very high interest of this target group for the presentations and excursions and this was an effective way to reach local children with the topics about the Mediterranean Shag and marine biodiversity.
D.3-3	To carry out presentations and excursions for secondary schools (10+10)	Partly	In contrast to primary schools, it was much more difficult to reach secondary schools as the topic was often not fitting in their educational programme. Instead, more presentations and excursions were done for primary schools, as agreed with the Commission.
D.3-4	To carry out presentations for the Universities (6)	Y	More than planned presentations were carried out. In addition, some students from the Biotechnical Faculty of Ljubljana University were involved in field work in the scope of Ornithology practical. They were trained to carry out monitoring at roost-sites and to conduct a simple study about use of buoys by Shags. This exercise will remain a part of the practical in years to follow.
D.4-1	To organize 2 press conferences	Y	One press conference was organized along with the closing event of the youth ornithological camp, and another one as part of the promotional event for the documentary and children’s book “Čudovito morje – Wonderful sea”. Another press conference was planned to be organized at the end of the project to present the final project results, notably the designated Natura 2000 sites, however, this objective was not yet reached. Nevertheless, the press conference will be organized once the SPA designation will be accomplished as part of after-LIFE activities.

D.4-2	To make 6 press releases	Partly	4 press releases were made, one about the introduction to the project and youth ornithological camp, one about the first workshop for the stakeholders, one about the GPS telemetry, and one about the documentary and children's book. The best journalistic response was to the last two topical subjects (telemetry, documentary and children's book) whereas the release about the stakeholders resulted in few published news in media. The remaining two press releases were planned to be made during the SPA designation procedure and at the end of the project to announce the designated SPAs, however, this was not done because of the delays in these activities.
D.4-3	To publish 15 articles in the national press	Partly	Publishing articles in general press strongly depends on the interest of the journalists to report about the topical subjects. In our project, some subjects were well covered with articles in general press, especially the promotion of the short documentary and children's book, and subjects related to cleaning oiled seashore and birds. Some subjects were less interesting for the journalists despite good informing (e.g. final event at the youth ornithological camp). Low number of published articles in these media must also be attributed to the fact that we made no press releases about the designation of SPAs because the objective was not yet reached, and also because there was a risk of negative publicity due to uncertainty about the procedure and a lack of consensus about the designation of proposed SPAs from MOP. If the procedure for the designation of SPAs would run smoothly the result would definitely be more published articles in general press. Once the SPA designation will be achieved the results will be presented to media in an after-LIFE press conference.
D.4-4	To publish 15 articles in the local press	Partly	Low number of published articles in these media must also be attributed to the fact that we made no press releases about the designation of SPAs because the objective was not yet reached, and also because there was a risk of negative publicity due to uncertainty about the procedure and a lack of consensus about the designation of proposed SPAs from MOP. If the procedure for the designation of SPAs would run smoothly the result would definitely be more published articles in general press. Once the SPA designation will be achieved the results will be presented to media in an after-LIFE press conference.
D.4-5	To publish at least 15 internet news on project web site	Y	Significantly more news was published on the project web page than planned. Besides news about the project activities related topics were covered, too. The reach was enhanced by sharing the news on the DOPPS' and KPS' Facebook pages.
D.4-6	To make 5 TV broadcasts about the project	Y	TV broadcasting was a very effective way of communication with the general public. More broadcasts than planned were made, and together with triple broadcasting of the documentary, the general public was well informed about project activities through TV. Positive feedback (mostly orally) was often received.
D.4-7	To make 5 radio broadcasts about the project	Partly	Four out of five planned radio broadcasts were done due to poor interest of radio houses. However, the deficit was compensated by more TV broadcasts. Besides, few contributors made a reference to LIFE or project SIMARINE-NATURA although this was always requested by the project PR coordinator.
D.4-8	To produce additional articles in specialized	Y	In contrary to general press, the internet media were very interested in reporting about the project activities and many short news and several longer articles were published

	magazines and on the internet		on web pages other than project web page. The project activities were also very well covered by specialized magazines, notably DOPPS' own magazine Svet ptic that reaches about 1.000 DOPPS members and many more people who come into contact with DOPPS (educational institutions, nature reserves visitors, participants at different events, etc).
D.5-1	To establish project web page	Y	The web page was established in early stage of the project and developed through the course of the project. Given that the project resources allocated to the web page were relatively low, cost/benefit ratio was satisfactory.
D.5-2	To register web page visiting statistics	Y	The page visiting statistics was registered from 25.5.2012 on (the first 5.5 months were not covered). The visiting rates were lower than foreseen in the project proposal despite promotion of the web page on all project products, presentations, at DOPPS web page, in different media (print or on the internet), etc. The web page visiting rates could be enhanced by adding more dynamic contents, especially to target younger ("internet") generation; however, this could not be done within the limits of available resources.
D.6-1	To produce a short documentary	Y	A 17 min. high quality documentary was produced with very limited resources. The cost/benefit ratio of this action is excellent.
D.6-2	To make 3 broadcasts of the documentary on national TV (100.000 people reach)	Y	The broadcasting was done in the afternoon and early evening period when rating is very high. This resulted in more than 100.000 reach in one of three broadcasts.
D.6-3	To develop additional ways of distribution (50.000 people reach)	Partly	Additional ways of documentary distribution were developed, one being particularly effective: the video was broadcasted non-stop at the exhibition in the Slovenian Natural History Museum which was visited by more than 25.000 visitors during the course of one year. There were also several other (but less effective) ways of distribution: it was embedded in the project home page, and presented at a special promotional event, a film festival, and during educational activities. The threshold of reaching 50.000 people was nevertheless not met.
D.7-1	To produce a Layman's report in two languages (SLO, ENG) (500 copies and e-version)	Y	A Layman's report was produce according to LIFE guidelines.
D.7-2	To distribute the Layman's report	Partly	About 40% of the Layman's reports were distributed in the first 3 months after its publication. Additional 20% are just about to be posted to stakeholders identified during the project. The rest will be distributed in the following months in the visitor centres of coastal protected areas (NRŠZ, KPS, KPSS, Miramare (Italy)) and at different events in the scope of other DOPPS' projects.
D.8-1	To set up 1 st set of	Y	The first set of notice boards was produced and set up to

	notice boards		inform the general public about the on-going project. The boards were set up in three busy locations near Mediterranean Shags' communal roost-sites where masses of tourists pass by, especially in the summer when Shags at roost-sites can be seen from the same point with a naked eye.
D.8-2	To set up 2 nd set of notice boards	N	The second set of notice boards was foreseen to replace the first set, giving information about the project results, most notably the map of designated Natura 2000 sites. The notice boards were produced to the stage they can be printed, but were not printed yet, because the borders of the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste are not definite yet (see explanation in chapter 5.3.5 Action C.5). Once the SPA will be final we will change the map and print and set up the boards to replace the current ones.
D.9-1	7 articles in local media	Y	High quality articles were produced and published in local media by a local professional ornithologist and nature conservationist who was subcontracted by KPS because they lack specialized staff.
D.9-2	3 TV or radio broadcasts	Y	2 TV and 1 radio broadcasts were made, always with at least short reference to the project and/or LIFE contribution.
D.9-3	3 exhibitions at local fairs	Y	Project materials were delivered at 5 local fairs, reaching mostly local inhabitants and some tourists.
D.9-4	ppt presentations of the project	Y	7 presentations were given to the general public, reaching about 50 people.
D.9-5	To promote the project and to distribute publications (posters) to the park visitors	Y	This was a very effective way of promoting the project and distributing the publications (mostly posters). The park is visited by about 300.000 people per year and about 3.000 people participate in guided tours. The promotion will continue in the future. Project materials (mostly posters and leaflets) will be distributed until the supplies will be exhausted.
D.10-1	To organize 4 workshops for the stakeholders	Partly	Three workshops for all stakeholders were organized and one workshop only for the owners of shell-fish farms (Mediterranean Shags' communal roost-sites). The workshops were an effective way of two-way communication, enabling immediate response and feedback from the stakeholders, but they also facilitated long term communication because they also brought together people who haven't met before. Important information was gained during workshops which had a direct impact on project results, for example the discussion about management measures held during the third workshop. The last workshop which was meant to present the final results of the project was not organized because of substantial delay in the implementation of actions C.4 and C.5. However, the stakeholders were informed by email about the public display of the Natura 2000 decree in July 2016, before it was interrupted upon the appeal from the Ministry of foreign affairs (see explanation in chapter 5.3.5

			Action C.5). They also received links to download the technical manual produced in action D.2 and Layman's report. The stakeholders will be further informed about crucial steps in the SPA designation procedure until the Natura 2000 decree will be final, most effectively by email.
E.1-1	To organize project activities	Y	It was the task of project manager to organize the project activities. This responsibility demanded a lot of adaptation to changing circumstances resulting from administrative obstacles and technical problems with GPS loggers, to the delays and uncertainties in the SPA designation procedure, to name a few. The management of the project took substantially more time than foreseen in the project proposal, also because of two project prolongations. A drawback in these unplanned circumstances was that the project manager and lead conservation ornithologist was one person, but it was not possible to adapt during the course of the project due to DOPPS' limited personnel.
E.1-2	To do the administrative and financial management of the project	Y	The administrative and financial management of the project was in part a task of the project manager and in part a task of the administrator. It was mostly done promptly in the course of the project.
E.1-3	To produce project reports according to the Common Provisions	Y	Three project reports were produced and submitted to EC during the course of the project: the Inception report (31.5.2012) and two Progress reports (4.12.2013 and 31.12.2014).
E.2-1	To keep a project archive	Y	The project archive was kept in DOPPS premises and maintained by the project administrator. Most of the archiving was done promptly and the archive was checked and, if needed, updated before each visit of the external monitoring team and in time of each reporting. Any new administrative requirements of the Commission which applied to our project were taken into account.
E.2-2	To monitor the project results	Y	The project results were evaluated against monitoring indicators listed in the project proposal.
E.3-1	To attend an IBA identification training workshop	Y	The workshop was organized by SPEA – BirdLife Portugal in Lisbon and attended by two ornithologists from the project team. The workshop facilitated implementation of the action A.1 substantially. See also task A.1-1.
E.3-2	To attend a telemetry workshop	Y	The workshop organized by the producer of GPS loggers (ECOTONE) was attended by two ornithologists from the project team. The workshop was an important training and networking event in terms of application of GPS loggers on birds.
E.3-3	To share the project results and experience with similar projects	Y	Besides the two planned networking workshops several unplanned networking activities were done, which enhanced transfer of knowledge and the project results, strengthened communication with other marine conservationists, and enabled sharing important information.
E.4-1	To make an External	N	The audit was cancelled because the net contribution of the

	Audit		EU does not exceed 300.000 EUR.
E.5-1	To produce an after-LIFE conservation plan	Y	The after-LIFE plan was produced and will serve as a guidance to follow the overall project objective, which is long-term conservation of the Mediterranean Shag in the Slovenian sea.

5.6 Analysis of long-term benefits

1. Environmental benefits

a. Direct / quantitative environmental benefits:

The SIMARINE-NATURA project targeted the non-breeding population of the Mediterranean Shags in the Slovenia's sea; however, there were no conservation actions which would directly impact the targeted population or its habitat. The scope of the project was to improve the conservation status of the species' environment rather than the population itself. The environmental improvement of the target species and its habitat can be thus demonstrated by the enlargement of the area under conservation status. Within the scope of the project one new marine IBA was designated (7.963 ha) and one extension to an existing IBA (155 ha) was made. The enlargement of the IBA network will result in new Natura 2000 sites, according to the project objectives. The designation of one Natura 2000 site (SPA Central Gulf of Trieste), which was proposed in this project, will enlarge the area with favourable conservation status in the project area by 37 %, targeting 1–1.4 % of the Mediterranean Shag biogeographic population.

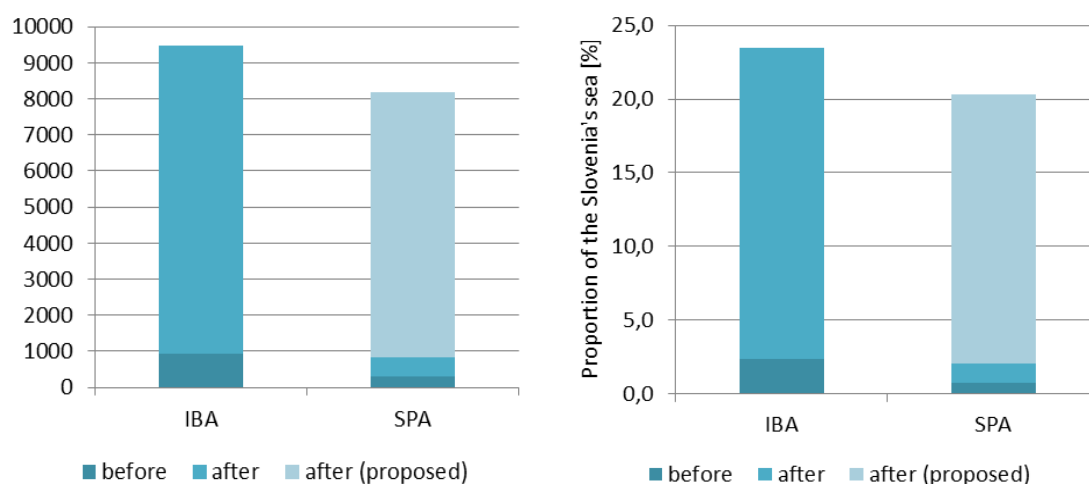


Figure 2. Contribution of the project SIMARINE-NATURA to the IBA and SPA network in marine environment in Slovenia; before / after – IBA/SPA areas in Slovenia's sea before and after the project SIMARINE-NATURA; Note that the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste, proposed in this project, has not been designated yet.

The protection of the target species will be ensured through national regulation applying to Natura 2000, as well as through strategic planning. Conservation objectives and measures will be adopted by the Natura 2000 management programme in Slovenia (PUN2000) for the period 2015–2020, most notably the protection of Shags' foraging habitat and food resources (fish) and mitigation of bycatch in fishing gear.

The designation of marine Natura 2000 for the Mediterranean Shag and concurrent adoption of conservation measures will have important policy implications in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework (MSF), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (Fisheries management), and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). The national Management plan for the marine environment (NUMO), adopted within the MSF, will be complemented with specific measures related to protection of Natura 2000 target species. In relation to CFP, the projects for the conservation and restoration of marine

biodiversity, and Natura 2000 will be implemented, and the knowledge on the state of the marine environment improved within the scope of the national Operative Programme for EMFF 2014–2020 (implementation of measures under Articles 40 and 80 of the EU regulation on EMFF). The designated marine Natura 2000 sites will also have direct implication for the national Maritime Spatial Planning which will need to take into account the Natura 2000 objectives to achieve the overall objective of environmental sustainability of activities in the marine environment.

Moreover, the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills an occurrence of oiled birds and other wild animals, produced in this project, will be included in the national Plan for civil protection and disaster relief in case of maritime accident. By becoming part of the plan, it can be activated under the command of the chief commander for civil protection and disaster relief.

b. Relevance for environmentally significant issues or policy areas

The project tackled the following EU environmental legislative framework:

- Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC): by the designation of Special protected areas (SPAs) for the Mediterranean Shag, Common Tern, Little Tern, Sandwich Tern, Yellow-legged Gull, Mediterranean Gull and Black-throated Loon according to Article 3.2;
- Habitat Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC): by the establishment of Natura 2000 conservation measures for the designated and proposed sites (included in PUN2000) according to Article 6.
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive: by the establishment of Natura 2000 measures which comply with the Directive's objective to achieve good environmental state (GES) of the marine environment, in particular the following descriptors: marine biodiversity (D1), commercial fish and shellfish (D3), food webs (D4), eutrophication (D5), sea floor integrity (D6), and marine litter (D10).
- 7th Environment Action Plan objective to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital: by the designation of Natura 2000 sites, by establishment of Natura 2000 conservation measures, by elaborating the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled birds and other marine fauna;
- Common Fisheries Policy: by establishment of conservation measures for sustainable fisheries and technical measures for mitigation of seabird bycatch in fishing gear.
- EU Action Plan for reducing incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears: by establishment of Natura 2000 conservation measures tackling bycatch of Mediterranean Shags.

2. Long-term benefits and sustainability

a. Long-term / qualitative environmental benefits

The project is expected to yield the following long-term benefits for the marine environment:

- preserved marine biodiversity
- healthy and functioning food webs
- restored sea floor integrity
- elimination of marine litter
- healthy populations of commercial and non-commercial fish

Remaining threats:

The non-breeding population of the Mediterranean Shag in the Slovenian sea depends strongly on two factors: manmade floating objects for roosting and healthy populations of benthic or benthopelagic fish suitable for food. Both features are facing certain threats. Recent changes in shellfish farming technology at Shags' roost-sites resulted in an increase of unsuitable floating objects (buoys) for roosting, seemingly leading to a reduction of roosting population. There are at least two possible buffering measures for this threat: 1) setting substitute floating objects in the areas of roosting sites or 2) innovation of new types of buoys which would be suitable for roosting Shags and technologically appropriate for modern shell-fish farming.

Moreover, fish populations that constitute Shags' diet could be depleted through excessive fishing or impacted by factors that deteriorate the state of marine benthic habitats, such as sailing of

ships with deep draught or certain fishing techniques such as bottom trawling. The Shags could also be impacted by anthropogenic factors contributing to direct mortality, most notably bycatch in fishing gear. The excessive fishing can be prevented through EMFF measures which support the small scale fisheries, including direct compensations for the loss of income due to temporary restrictions in fishing activities. The effects of bycatch could be mitigated by applying technical measures on fishing gear such as deterring markers and modified nets.

However, none of these threats has been properly evaluated by now, meaning that foundation for defining effective conservation measures is essentially missing.

We have prepared a detailed after-LIFE conservation plan to outline the continuation of activities after the project end (Annex 35). Part of after-LIFE activities is planned to increase the knowledge about the potential threats, outlined in the management guidelines elaborated under action A.3 (Annex 12) and presented also in the technical manual (Annex 21), including fisheries bycatch, fishing intensity, disturbance and structural changes of roost-sites. Proper conservation measures should be proposed based on these evaluations. Possible measures are: development of new types of buoys which will meet the technological needs of shellfish farming and roosting Shags, technical measures to reduce bycatch in fishing gear, adaptation of fishing intensity to ecologically sustainable level or increasing selectivity of fishing gear, etc.

b. Long-term / qualitative economic benefits

The project will have several long-term benefits for the local and national economy through:

- Ensuring sustainability of food resources: Natura 2000 measures which aim at protection of food resources for the Mediterranean Shag (benthic fish) will directly regulate fishing activities to be performed on sustainable level; moreover, the existing shell-fish farming which supports the roosting population of Mediterranean Shags will be supported through Natura 2000 measures.
- Development of ecotourism and recreation: protection under Natura 2000 will ensure that the marine environment will remain attractive for the visitors. This will be achieved through regulation of the human activities which could severely deteriorate the Mediterranean Shag habitat through water, air and noise pollution, and harming marine biodiversity, as well as through facilitating diversification of activities in fisheries sector.
- Development of medical rehabilitation centres: the healthy marine environment will serve as an attribute for the development of health restoration services.
- Mitigation of potential oil-spills impacts: activation of the protocol for acting in case of accidental oil spills and occurrence of oiled marine fauna will essentially help restoring the ecosystem and in turn its economic value for the above mentioned sectors.
- Innovative projects such as development of new types of buoys for shell-fish farming

c. Long-term / qualitative social benefits

The project is expected to have several social benefits:

- Ensuring food security through sustainability of fisheries and maricultural sectors.
- Long term employability due to sustainability of economic sectors, supported by healthy marine environment (sustainable small-scale fishing, shell-fish farming, ecotourism).
- Better connectivity of local inhabitants through involvement in concrete after-LIFE conservation projects.
- Higher public health maintained through recreation, spiritual experience and medical service in healthy environment.
- Higher gross happiness of local communities due to living in balanced environment with low intensity of stress factors such as noise pollution.

d. Continuation of the project actions by the beneficiary or by other stakeholders.

As reported, the activities for the designation of the SPA Central Gulf of Trieste, planned in action C.5, have not been completed yet and will continue after the project by MOP (associated beneficiary).

Among successfully completed actions several will continue as part of after-LIFE activities. Two of them are monitoring of the Mediterranean Shags according to the ESAS method (action A.1) and

monitoring of Shags at roost-sites (action A.3). The monitoring will be implemented by the coordinating beneficiary. Monitoring at sea is planned to be expanded to the entire Gulf of Trieste in partnership with Italian ornithologists. Moreover, periodic studies of Shags' diet (as the one in action A.4) have been planned to monitor any major changes in the diet which could indicate important changes in the marine ecosystem, such as changes of benthic habitats or changes in fish communities. These studies are planned to be carried out by external experts, like in case of this project.

Action C.3 was dedicated in part to elaboration of management guidelines for the Natura 2000 sites for the Mediterranean Shag. The guidelines were outlined based on existing knowledge about threats, which proved to be poor. After-LIFE activities will thus focus also on thorough assessment of potential threats for the population of the Mediterranean Shag in Slovenian sea.

Moreover, the Protocol for acting in case of accidental oil-spills and occurrence of oiled birds (action C.6) will be included in the national Plan for civil protection and disaster relief by competent state authorities.

3. Replicability, demonstration, transferability, cooperation:

The identification of marine IBAs in the project SIMARINE-NATURA was done according to standardized BirdLife International methodology, meaning that the project actions for the identification of IBAs are replicable and directly transferable to other parts of the Gulf of Trieste which is an ecological entity in terms of hosting post-breeding population of Mediterranean Shags. The positive outcome of the networking within the scope SIMARINE-NATURA is much higher awareness about the need to protect the Gulf of Trieste as a whole, rather than only a small part in the Slovenia's sea. In fact, the IBA Central Gulf of Trieste was recognized by BirdLife International as possible transboundary IBA. Likewise, a recommendation to expand the IBA/SPA to the Italian waters was given in the socio-economic analysis elaborated in action C.4. LIPU (Italian BirdLife partner) has been encouraged to propose a similar project and offered support from DOPPS, however, current LIPU's capacities are inadequate to fulfil this. An important obstacle seems to be lack of support from the Italian government for such project. However, the expansion of monitoring of the Mediterranean Shag and other seabirds at sea according to ESAS method, which is the key data collection method for the IBA identification, has been included in the proposed Interreg ADRION project (listed in after-LIFE activities) (Annex 35).

4. Best Practice lessons:

Best practice for the identification of marine IBAs according to BLI criteria, followed in this project, was developed in a sequence of marine LIFE projects from 2003 on. In a decade the protocol has been thoroughly tested and adapted but it was mainly used for breeding colonies of seabirds. During the data analysis in action C.1 it was recognized that it did not fully suit the case of non-breeding Mediterranean Shags, especially regarding the GPS telemetry data analytical approach. The protocol should thus be adapted in the future also for dataset on seabirds outside their breeding areas.

5. Innovation and demonstration value:

Within the scope of the action A.2 (GPS telemetry) a method for catching Shags at sea had to be innovated as there were no previous cases of successful trapping outside breeding colonies. The trap was developed by project team and external assistants. The efficiency of trapping was very satisfactory, however, there were some limitations regarding the trapping locations (it seems that Shags avoid floating object with mounted trap when there are a lot of other objects to choose). The methodology could be further developed to overcome this limitation. The trap could be registered as a prototype and is recommended to be used in other areas at sea where Shag use floating objects for resting or roosting. It is potentially useful for other bird species that use floating object for resting (e.g. gulls).

6. Long term indicators of the project success:

Area of sea protected under Natura 2000

Number of roosting Shags in the coastal Natura 2000 sites

Number of foraging Shags in the off-shore Natura 2000 site (SPA Central Gulf of Trieste)

Number of conservation measures included in PUN2000

Number of after-LIFE projects related to management of the Natura 2000 sites