



## **Final Evaluation**

### **Project title:**

### **Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)**

**Region: Europe and CIS/ Slovak Republic**

**GEF Project ID: 2261**

**UNDP Project ID: 55927/46803**

**OP/SP: 12. Ecosystem Management**

**National Executing Agency: Ministry of Environment**

**National Implementing Agency: Slovak Water Management Enterprise**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)</b>			
<b>GEF Project ID:</b>	2261		<b>at endorsement (million USD)</b>	<b>at completion (million USD)</b>
<b>UNDP Project ID:</b>	55927 /46803	<b>GEF financing:</b>	0,97	0,97
<b>Country:</b>	Slovakia	<b>IA/EA own:</b>	0	0
<b>Region:</b>	Europe and CIS	<b>Government:</b>	3,27	3,45
<b>Focal Area:</b>	Integrated Ecosystem Management	<b>Other:</b>	0,073	0,35
<b>FA Objectives, (OP/SP):</b>	12. Ecosystem management	<b>Total co-financing</b>	3,35	3,80*
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	UNDP	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	4,32	4,67
<b>Other Partners involved:</b>	n/a	<b>ProDoc Signature (date project began):</b>		2 May 2007
		<b>(Operational) Closing Date:</b>	Proposed: 31 December 2012	Actual: 31 December 2012

\*Unable to assess - there is not enough evidence on concrete co-financing allocations in the financial records provided.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project was selected for support by the Global Environment Facility as a pilot for the implementation of integrated ecosystem management through water planning, based on integrated water management, biodiversity protection and socioeconomic development of the area. The project started in 2007 and concluded in 2012 with a planned combined budget of 4,32 mil. USD. The project area is a lowland area of 29 539 ha currently focused on intensive agricultural farming within the Michalovce and Sobrance districts of the Košice administrative region.

The project site was dominated by various types of forest while the rivers and ponds held rich communities of aquatic plants. However, as a result of two centuries of land drainage and flood protection works the area was given to farming and only remnants of the natural habitat survive. However, these flood meadows still serve as valuable seed banks for restoring further areas to wet grasslands. The Senné depression within the project area is the most important site for nesting and migrating birds in Slovakia. Maintaining conditions for intensive agriculture is difficult and expensive but a change to soundly managed wetlands would bring environmental benefits. Because of difficult soil fertility and soil moisture conditions in this area (clay soils), agricultural productivity is significantly below average. There are no production industries or food processing industries located in the area, which results in a low number of employment opportunities and poor socio-economic situation.

**The main goal** of the project was to mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors within the context of

the EU Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 and implementation of the Danube River Protection Convention (including the Danube Basin Nutrient Reduction Programme).

The project was implemented under UNDP national execution project requirements, with a flat and all-inclusive structure reflecting the multidisciplinary focus and a participatory approach. Implementation was heavily supported by UNDP external consultant. The most complex problems included land ownership issues, difficulties with co-financing and incentives, and the slow perception of economic benefit from the local population.

It should be noted that the project was rather specific due to its complexity, interlinking the human resource development, environmental and economic aspects in the region. It was provided to an area which was not ready (and without this support would hardly ever be) for any assistance. The communication among local municipalities was absent, population growth in the region is secured due to Roma minority, the economic growth was minimal and local development capacities were completely missing.

The project purpose was defined as follows: **at the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership [originally the LEADER Local Action Group was planned] shall be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of (semi-) natural floodplain habitats that support a representative range of species.**

## EVALUATION RATING TABLE

<b>Evaluation Ratings:</b>			
<b>1. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>2. IA&amp; EA Execution</b>	<b>Rating</b>
M&E design at entry	MU	Quality of UNDP Implementation	S
M&E Plan Implementation	MS	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	MS
Overall quality of M&E	MU	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	MS
<b>3. Assessment of Outcomes</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>4. Sustainability</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Relevance	R	Financial resources	MU
Effectiveness	MS	Socio-political	MU
Efficiency	MS	Institutional framework and governance	ML
Overall Project Outcome Rating	MS	Environmental	ML
		Overall likelihood of sustainability	MU

Key: MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory; MS – Moderately Satisfactory; S – Satisfactory; R – Relevant, For sustainability: ML – Moderately likely, MU – Moderately unlikely

The positive aspect of the project was that the management structures grouped representatives of various institutions, who gradually started to see problems from different perspectives and had to overcome the narrow perception of the problems from the view of their own organisation. The socio-economic dimension of the project was thus better accepted and brought the understanding that only local ownership of the Integrated Environmental Management can sustain the benefits of the project. It was understood that the measures must be introduced for and with the local people.

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

The evaluation was carried out in a limited time period of approximately two months and combined several evaluation methods and tools: a desk review of available secondary data,

interviews with key stakeholders including beneficiaries, a questionnaire survey among members of the established civic association, focus group, expert consultations, and unobtrusive observation.

**Based on the evaluation findings, the conclusions are as follows:**

- The project seems to have been more relevant to the strategic objectives of the UNDP/GEF than to the needs and expectations of local people, but it opened an important cross-sectoral discussion on local priorities and appropriate solutions, and thus the project is rated as **relevant**. The main shortcomings are too optimistic estimates of local needs, opportunities, capacities and motivations at the identification and formulation stages of project preparation. Resolving the ownership issues was underestimated and extra effort was needed to engage local people.
- **The achievement of objectives was moderately satisfactory.** Most promising are the results in building capacities and partnerships (outcome 2) and in piloting conservation practices (outcome 3) while fulfilment of other outcomes related to practical adoption of long-term strategies and replication of best practices (outcomes 1 and 4) depends on many external factors beyond the direct influence of project team. The main constraints for long-term success are ineffective national policies, legal land ownership issues and financial incentives to support and disseminate the project approach.
- Only the adaptive project management and gradual adjustments of project structure and budget allowed the expected outputs to be reached. **The efficiency is rated moderately satisfactory.** Although the expected outputs were reached, the cost of services and project management were higher than planned. The evaluation team was not able to get sufficient data on details of financial expenditures, in particular on co-financing. Nevertheless, prior to any change, the changes were discussed and approved by the Project Board, Steering committee as well as by the UNDP.
- The survey among stakeholders confirmed the beginning of changes that should contribute in the long term to the objectives, although these objectives will not be reached by the end of project implementation. **The effectiveness is rated moderately satisfactory.**
- **The sustainability of benefits is rated moderately unlikely.** It depends in particular on availability of financial resources, on the level of local ownership and capacities, and on commitment of people and the established civic association. The project significantly contributed to empowering and engaging of local actors and to cross-sectoral communication and cooperation, but there are still internal and external disabling factors that bring significant risks for sustainability.
- **The impacts, as well as the whole project, are rated moderately satisfactory** as the project created some important conditions (both technical and behavioural) that may be transformed into long-term benefits. However, the real impacts can be assessed only later.

**The main recommendations and lessons learned are clustered around three topics:**

Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of similar projects (recommendations for UNDP/GEF and other funding agencies):

- The objectives and strategies of the projects must reflect the actual conditions, realistic assumptions (including legal frameworks and financial incentives) and, in particular, the

needs of all intended beneficiaries – who must participate in project design to obtain local ownership.

- Project logic (theory of change) and the responsibility of all actors must be clear from the project document, monitoring indicators must be realistic and SMART. If necessary, ex-ante evaluation mechanism should be introduced to ensure quality of the proposals.
- Smaller and clearly focused projects are more appropriate than complex projects for rural areas with poor capacities and limited experience.
- Complex projects like Laborec-Uh must ensure that the necessary interventions at the national policy level are identified and secured.
- The reporting format must allow monitoring of project progress (and expenditure) and reflect decision-making needs (there must be a feedback/response if required). Reporting twice a year is sufficient, urgent issues can be solved by the means of “control days” or specific topic-oriented reports.

Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project (recommendations for implementing organisations)

- The main positive outcome of the project is the existence of a competent civic association. It is important to focus on its sustainability – on strengthening human resources, improving capability to address external financial resources and on engaging more local actors, in particular from the private sector. This cannot be achieved without some additional financial support in the next few years, which must be actively acquired from external as well as local sources.
- Pilot implementations and their environmental and socio-economic impacts must be monitored after the end of the project and corrective actions introduced if needed. Supervision by local (or national) authorities is highly recommended.
- The visibility of project results must significantly improve. The project website does not offer relevant and coherent information on project approaches and results.

Best and worst practices/lessons learned in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success (valid for all actors)

- The success of any intervention depends on local actors. Based on the project experience it is important to prepare the region, to start with small partnership/community building activities, and only when interest comes from the region, to start with developing integrated strategies. Small steps with participatory and learning-by-doing approaches are better than one big complex project understandable only to few people and external consultants.
- Projects need to have clear ownership, best if initiated locally and designed/managed by the people who know the local conditions well and support the project vision.
- Integrated Environmental Management is not possible if land ownership and legal constraints on actions are unclear.
- The reporting system must allow both the decision-making process and the dissemination of results (awareness raising) among targeted population. The messages must be simple and clear.

## List of Acronyms

<b>APA</b>	Agriculture Paying Agency
<b>c.a.</b>	civic association
<b>COMDEKS</b>	Community Development and Knowledge Management Initiative
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUR</b>	Euro
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GWP</b>	Global Water Partnership
<b>ICPRD</b>	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
<b>IEM</b>	Integrated Environmental Management
<b>ILDS</b>	Integrated Local Development Strategy
<b>LAG</b>	Local Action Group
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Environment
<b>MSP</b>	Medium-size project
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NNR</b>	National Nature Reserve
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PCB</b>	Polychlorinated biphenyl
<b>PIR</b>	Project Implementation Report
<b>PM</b>	Project Manager
<b>RBMP</b>	River Basin Management Plan
<b>RDP</b>	Rural Development Plan
<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>SNC</b>	State Nature Conservancy
<b>SOS/BirdLife</b>	Society for Bird Protection
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protected Area
<b>STU</b>	Slovak Technical University
<b>SWME</b>	Slovak Water Management Enterprise
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNCBD</b>	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WFD</b>	Water Framework Directive
<b>ZMOS</b>	The Association of Slovak Towns and Villages



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

**The objective of the assignment is to assess the achievement of project results and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from the project** “Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)” [further as the Laborec–Uh project] **and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.**

The evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is valid, credible, reliable and useful. The evaluation of project performance uses obligatory rating scales on the performance criteria as specified in the Terms of Reference (ToR, see Annex 1). The applied evaluation methodology is based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria - **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects.

### SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The five evaluation criteria were further specified through the set of questions in the Terms of Reference. The individual questions were answered in compliance with the general understanding of the evaluation criteria. A Table summarising the indicators, sources of verification and approach is appended in Annex 7.

Due to the fact that the evaluation concerns a single project and was conducted in a short time, the non-experimental design was applied. This type of design was fully compliant with the descriptive and/or normative type of evaluation questions clustered within the five OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation methodology included the following evaluation tools/instruments for data collection:

- **desk review**, that served the purpose of collecting all available secondary information - project documents and reports, financial data, strategic documents, information from the project website and other relevant materials (see Annex 5, List of Documents Reviewed),
- most of the primary (often qualitative) data were gathered through the **semi-structured (face-to-face and telephone) interviews** with the direct beneficiaries and contractors implementing individual components (see Annex 3). The interview was used to gather specific information and the opinions of the persons engaged in or affected by the project, its context, implementation, results, lessons learned and, where possible, impact,
- **questionnaire** to address the whole member community of the established civic association to find out their perception of the preparatory activities, operation and sustainability issues (see Annex 8),
- due to the substantial number of other relevant stakeholders affected by the project, a group interview tool – **focus group** – was used, which brought together different stakeholders in a project and collected a large amount of qualitative information in a relatively short time (the

application of the instrument revealed the participants' perceptions and views on topics and questions relevant to the evaluation and the information collected was used for identifying and/or interpreting the effects of the projects concerned),

- **expert consultations** – within technical consultancies institutions were used, and
- an **unobtrusive observation** during the field visits was also applied as one of the instruments for the evaluation (see Annexes 2 and 4).

The applied methodology has certain limitations and cannot serve for the assessment of the net impact of the intervention. Nevertheless, mostly qualitative primary and secondary data were collected and their analysis resulted in findings and conclusions with high internal but low external validity.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT**

The structure of the evaluation report follows the ToR requirements. Chapter 2 describes the evaluated intervention and its development context. Chapter 3 summarizes the findings related to project design, implementation and the results. The main evaluation conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned are provided in Chapter 4. Supporting documentation is attached in the set of annexes.

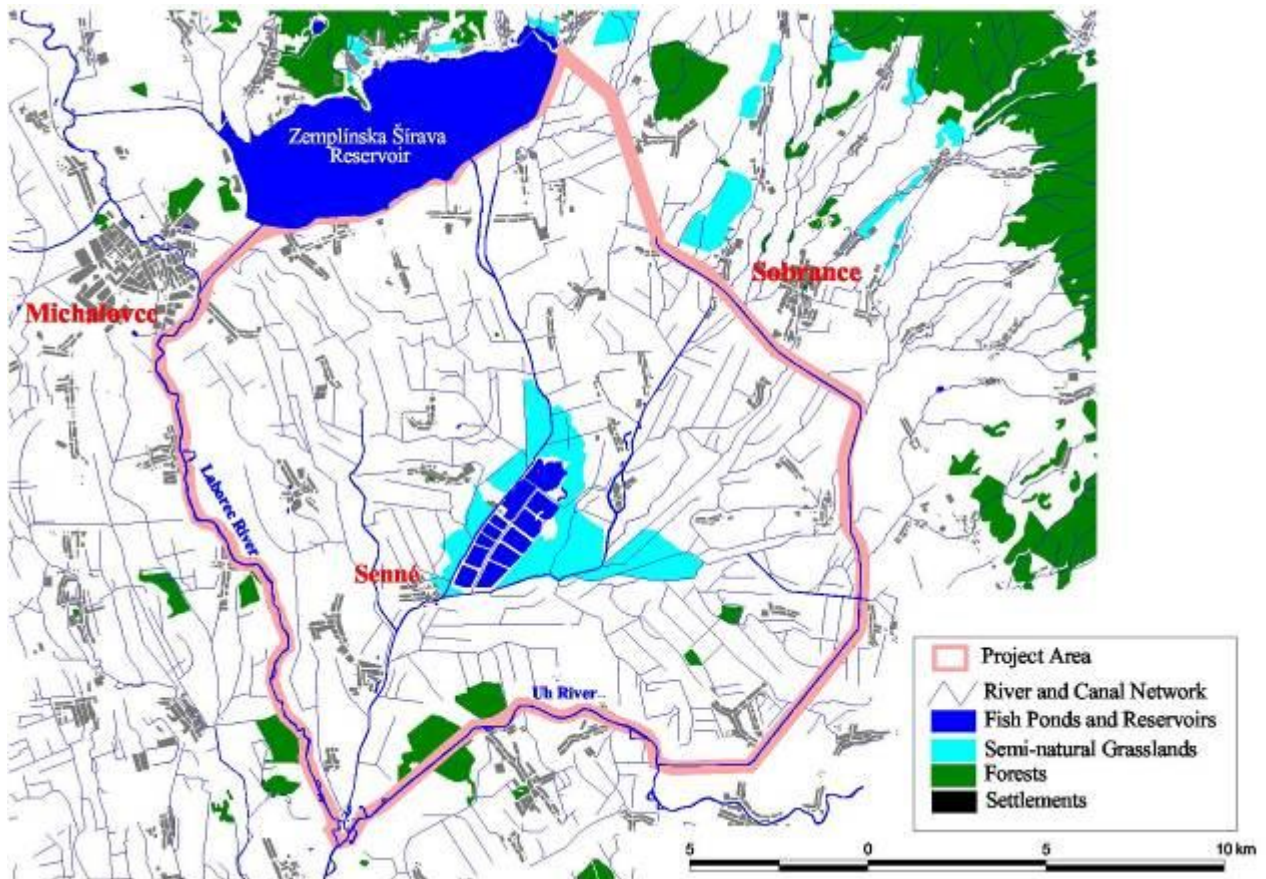
## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

### **PROJECT START AND DURATION**

The project concept originated around 1998 from the civil society organization DAPHNE (The Institute of Applied Ecology). Since 2000, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has further developed the concept as a broader approach to integrated landscape management in the region. The identification and formulation stages were continued through a set of consultations and a socio-economic survey in 2005. The project started in September 2007 and was completed in December 2012. The project is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) medium-size project (MSP), implemented under the UNDP national execution modality, with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) as the national implementing entity.

The project area is a lowland area focused on intensive agricultural farming, with the size of 29 539 ha, and belonging to the Košice administrative region districts Michalovce and Sobrance. It includes 32 villages, with a total population of about 19 990. Because of difficult soil fertility and soil moisture conditions in this area (clay soils), agricultural productivity is significantly below average. There are no production industries or food processing industries located in the area, which results in a low number of employment opportunities and poor socio-economic situation.

### **Map 1: The Project Area**



As stated in the project document, there are 47 agricultural entities (including the fish farm) and 114 small private farmers operating in the project area. Plant production is oriented mainly to intensive cultivation of cereals, fodder crops, sugar-beet, maize, legume, and oil plants. Animal husbandry (beef and pigs) is grouped in a few large units. Fish farming is located in the central part of the project area. The ponds were privatized in 2000 and are used mainly to breed stock and produce fingerlings. There are 26 fish-ponds built and separated by small dykes.

From the geographic point of view, the project area is located within the Latorica River Basin in the Eastern Slovakian Lowlands which lie wholly inside the Danube River catchment. The Laborec River (in the west) and Uh River (in the south) border the project area itself. To the north and up-hill, the project area is bordered by the Zemplínska Šírava Reservoir and in the east by a large drainage canal discharging into the Uh River. The project area is more or less bisected by the Čierna Voda River, a tributary of the Laborec whose catchment is largely within the project area. The project area itself lies in the Senné depression, which has a rather flat or slightly undulating relief ranging between 100 and 120 m above sea level. Low levees formed by sediments along the rivers Laborec and Uh exist as very flat ridges that are 2 – 5 km wide and hold back the floodwaters of the rivers during normal and dry hydrological conditions. Along these levees, there are swampy depressions that are usually flooded during snowmelt, heavy rainfall and by water infiltrating from the rivers during high water levels.

The project area involves protection of the land, which includes National Nature Reserve Senne ponds (Senianske rybníky) in the most strict, fifth level of nature conservation, with an area of 213,3 ha with its buffer zone 211,2 ha. In addition, this area is designated as a protected site at the European level under the NATURA 2000 – SCI0208 Senne ponds 213,51 ha, SPA024 Senne ponds 2668,47 ha, and the area of 242,6 ha designated as Ramsar Site Senne Ponds - wetland of international importance.

## **PROBLEMS THAT THE PROJECT SOUGHT TO ADDRESS**

Prior to adjustment of the land for farming including drainage and melioration, the project site was dominated by various types of forest while the rivers and ponds held rich communities of aquatic plants. However, as a result of drainage and flood protection works carried out over more than two hundred years, the project area has been increasingly cleared for farming, and only remnants of natural habitat persisted. The lowest part of the area – the Senné depression – proved impracticable to drain, therefore fish ponds were created around, with oxbow lakes, wet meadows and some floodplain forests surviving, and with maintained species-rich communities of plants and animals. The surviving flood meadows serve as valuable seed banks for restoring further areas of wet grasslands. The Senné depression is the most important area for nesting and migrating birds in Slovakia.

Systematic attempts to deal with the flooding and water-logging in the region began early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when some drainage channels were constructed. Such works, combined with channel alterations, continued on an ad-hoc basis for about a century but they never achieved an effective degree of flood control. The water regime is entirely artificially managed and local land use and urban development became accustomed to this situation. Water and land management in the project area has historically relied on substantial, capital-intensive drainage and irrigation systems to support intensified but unsustainable agricultural production. By the end of 1990, 85% of the project area had been drained.

The initial idea, to adjust the water management systems in order to restore semi-natural floodplain habitats, came from DAPHNE and was meant as a purely technical intervention. During the search for various funds to support this idea, the Slovak Water Management Authority found it interesting as this would save costs in the long-term and assist implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Negotiations started with UNDP representatives and GEF sources were identified. The requirements to provide support from GEF funds demanded a broader scope of integrated ecosystem management and the inclusion of socio-economic aspects into the project design. The planning/design and approval stage thus took practically 10 years (1997-2007).

The participatory approach to project design was adopted during the identification stage. The local stakeholders were willing to participate at the preparatory meetings and it was expected that they would be interested and would cooperate, but the identification of local needs was difficult. Once they understood that the project was not going to provide the financial sources directly to local actors, interest was lost and resistance to cooperating was even bigger when rumours spread that the whole area was to be artificially flooded.

## IMMEDIATE AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The project was selected for support by the GEF as a pilot for implementation of integrated ecosystem management through water planning based on integrated water management, biodiversity protection and socio-economic development of the area.

As stated in the planning documents, **the main goal** of the project was to mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors of new EU members and accession states within the context of the EU Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 and implementation of the Danube River Protection Convention (including the Danube Basin Nutrient Reduction Programme).

The project purpose was stated as **by the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership (originally the LEADER Local Action Group was planned) shall be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of (semi-) natural floodplain habitats that support a representative range of species.**

## BASELINE INDICATORS ESTABLISHED

The project document contains logframes setting out the indicators, their baseline and target values. After the Inception phase, some of the target values were decreased, following the Mid-term evaluation some indicators were adjusted. The impact indicators were mentioned in the separate Annex and repeated outcome indicators from the logframe. The achievement of indicators is generally described in the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs).

## MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Project execution follows the UNDP national execution project requirements. The implementation arrangements of the project i.e. the management structure, was rather flat and wide. It reflected the multidisciplinary focus of the project and participatory approach trying to engage wide range of stakeholders at the national and local level. On the other hand, a disadvantage of this approach is that there was no concrete applicant (local “owner” of the project idea) and the accountability scheme was not sufficiently clear.

The project was run by a Project Manager, who in a short time was replaced. Subsequently, a replacement Project Manager, located in Bratislava, was appointed (responsible for the coordination of roles among the Ministries) together with a Local Coordinator dealing with the day-to-day management in Michalovce region. In the middle of the implementation the project employed a part-time assistant to help with the preparation of monthly Newsletter and project proposals for funding of

complementary activities in the project area from other sources<sup>1</sup>. The financial management of the project was carried out by the Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SWME), which provided office space for the project in Michalovce.

The main executive body responsible for the overall management of the project was the MoE. The MoE appointed the National Project Director who was responsible for the project, namely, for the use of funds, achievement of the overall project objectives and also for the interaction among relevant stakeholders. The cooperation among state administration bodies (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoA) and MoE, and their agencies) involved in the project was ensured by their participation at the Project Steering Committee, while their local branch offices were involved in the Project Board. The decision to appoint the National Director from the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute ensured that the institutional memory of the project was safe-guarded. The Ministries suffered from high staff turnover: in the five year implementation period, the MoE had seven Ministers and the Ministry itself was abolished and newly established again.

The Project Steering Committee (SC) consisted of representatives from UNDP, MoE, MoA, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (abolished in 2010), the Agriculture Paying Agency, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, Hydromelioration Company, State Nature Conservancy, Office of Košice Self-Governing Region, the association of municipalities - ZMOS, representative of the farmers, representative of micro-regions within the project area, the Agricultural Research Institute Michalovce, and the project manager (altogether 27 members). Its role was to guide the project and approve any major changes in the project plans. Moreover, SC members were expected to facilitate the implementation of project activities in their respective organizations, and to ensure the integration of project-inspired activities into existing programmes and practices. Some members never attended the SC meetings; on several occasions there were personnel changes in the organizations and newly appointed representatives did not participate.

The Project Board worked at the local level and comprised representatives of the main local stakeholders, including the local branch offices of all project partners. Overall, it consisted of 23 representatives and a few were members of both SC and the Project Board.

As described in the project documentation, project activities should have been implemented with the assistance of the project partners, and their respective roles/tasks were set out as follows:

- DAPHNE's role during the project implementation was to undertake species and habitat inventories as a base for preparation of restoration plans and monitoring of changes. It was also responsible for the preparation of restoration plans based on current habitat structure.
- Ecological and education/training centre SOSNA's primary aim was to motivate people to implement alternative models of solving environmental problems primarily at local and regional levels and mobilise mainly participation of local people at the project activities.
- The Slovak Technical University, Department of Land and Water Resource Management covered the elaboration of hydrological studies necessary for the restoration work.

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<sup>1</sup> This was covered from external sources, contracted through the civic association

- SOS/BirdLife Slovakia – focused on establishing and restoring wetlands as bird habitats and was a crucial partner in negotiations with local stakeholders when preparing restoration activities.
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) - provided farmers (through the Agriculture Paying Agency) with up-to-date information on agricultural subsidies and application procedures. It was expected that the MoA would be one of the key co-financing sources of the project. In addition, the MoA, being responsible for the consolidation and protection of agricultural land through their local and regional land offices, would provide assistance with these types of activities within the project.
- Hydromelioration state enterprise - their cooperation was focused on the sub-Basin Management Plan for the Čierna Voda River.
- Slovak Water Management Enterprise (MoE agency) - took the lead in the preparation of the sub-Basin Management Plan for Čierna Voda River.
- State Nature Conservancy (SNC) - provided mainly data required for the project activities and technical assistance with the monitoring in the field.
- Global Water Partnership (GWP) was additionally involved as the project partner to prepare a study on possibilities of wastewater management in the area.
- Local authorities have played a role in the project implementation mainly in organising public meetings with local people.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The project planning documents identified five main outcomes as follows:

- 1) Stakeholders adopt a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices;
- 2) Stakeholder capacity, policies, and incentives to implement Integrated Environmental Management are strengthened and operational;
- 3) Model ecosystem-oriented biodiversity conservation practices piloted by major stakeholders;
- 4) Replication of best practices and lessons learned from the experience of Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) implementation in other regions of the Eastern Lowland, as well as other new EU members and accession states;
- 5) Successful support, monitoring and evaluation of project implementation itself.

It was also expected that the project team would:

- review and identify the areas for the creation of new or improved natural conditions, which will result in increased opportunities for farmers to apply for agro-environmental subsidies;
- design and partially implement water management measures, based on assessment of different scenarios/models of water levels, which will then reach good ecological status, and
- restore wetland habitats in the vicinity of Senné fishponds and thus lower the negative impacts caused by the bird population on fish farming operations.

A detailed description of planned and achieved outputs is presented in Annex 10 (some of the outputs were not considered applicable and some describe only activities, for example: workshops and seminars).

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 PROJECT DESIGN / FORMULATION

The period from initial project concept to the start of implementation was ten years. During this period the socio-economic dimension was added to the original technical project and the final product was adjusted to fit the requirements of the GEF. The approval procedure itself took three years. Eventually, the final proposal was very ambitious and was based on unrealistic assumptions while the potential risks were underestimated. The integrated ecosystem management could not be implemented without taking into account the socio-economic dimension of the region and without engagement of local people. This was a key assumption to ensure that the environmental measures introduced could be sustained. The project thus had to focus on creating local ownership and facilitating participatory approaches and cross-sectoral partnership.

The rationale of the project was fully justified. The analytical part of the project documentation provided all necessary and relevant data explaining the reasons for this type of intervention. The project was designed as pilot intervention and covered a few distinct but closely linked components including capacity development in the region (establishment of partnership), development of strategies related to water management and regional development as well as introduction of restoration measures. It is clear that GEF was most likely the only possible option to fund this type of pilot project as no national sources were available to support such activities. Other external sources (mainly EU funds) have different focus, scope, size and duration; therefore the implementation of a complex project with numerous diverse components would not be feasible.

The objectives of the project were set out in the project documentation. The logical framework sets the overall objective but does not state the impact indicators. These are mentioned separately in the annexed table at the end of the project, which basically repeats outcome indicators determined in the logframe for both objective and individual outcomes.

The project purpose provided description of the planned output i.e. *by the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership will be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of (semi-) natural floodplain habitats that provide water quality improvements and support a representative range of species.* The outcomes that should be fully compliant with the purpose mention long-term strategy for eco-system based water and agriculture management practices, stakeholders' capacity to implement IEM, piloting of biodiversity conservation practices and replication of best practices and lessons learned. These are mostly outputs or activities rather than



outcomes. The accompanying indicators are thoroughly elaborated but the logic behind does not fully correspond with the standard approach. The project objective should always reflect outcomes therefore the indicators set at the level of the project objective should measure achievement of outcomes. In this case, the project objective and outcomes are measured through sets of numerous separate indicators. Moreover, the baseline and target values are not always measured and/or measurable, or even not relevant. For further details on relevance, measurability, appropriateness and achievement of indicators see Annex 11. Although the proposal to change the target values and some indicators was discussed and agreed at the SC meeting in June 2011, the essence of the indicators was not changed.

Assumptions and Risks were specified in the logframe. Although identified mostly correctly (with the exception of their location in the logframe), their potential to have a negative effect on the project implementation was underestimated. None of the risks in the project document was found critical and mitigation strategies were absent. The first critical assumption was the belief that the originally envisaged Local Action Group (LAG) will be established, able to prepare strategy and succeed with the application for LEADER programme funds while the approval procedure for both the project and Rural Development Plan (RDP) was difficult to estimate.

The preliminary identification of future stakeholders' willingness to cooperate was carried out during the preparatory stage of the project. The stakeholder analysis was even carried out and clearly indicated the problems/risks expected in relation to the lack of capacities and motivation to cooperate. Unfortunately, the project proposal did not take these findings into account and no measures were proposed on how to approach these crucial obstacles. The declared willingness of local municipalities to cooperate quickly disappeared when the project activities started and no financial sources were readily available to fund the local needs. Expectations of local stakeholders in relation to the project, its objectives and potential benefits for the region remained vague.

The design of the project relied also on the assumption that agro-environmental subsidies would serve as financial incentives for the farmers. Provision of subsidies eventually followed the rules, which did not motivate the farmers to test greening activities. The assumed success with the establishment of LAG and gained LEADER support also proved to be misleading. A similar type of the project was implemented in Poland and the project activities resulted in the establishment of a LAG, which successfully applied for the LEADER funding. This served as an inspiration for the project in Eastern Lowlands, however, the local conditions were substantially different from those in Poland. Local capacities were absent, there was no communication among local stakeholders and potential leaders were not identified. There was no genuine interest in the region to gather people, ideas and mobilise local resources. The local environment was extremely passive and the project staff needed a lot of time, effort and funds to create partnerships. The countryside was damaged by human activities, Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) pollution, there were very few working opportunities, young people were leaving the region and seeking for job opportunities abroad and a Roma population was growing.

The project was created outside the region; therefore the ownership had to be "created or literally imposed" during the implementation. This was the biggest risk and no strategies to eliminate/ameliorate this risk were prepared in advance. Ad-hoc measures had to be introduced to save the project. The mobilisation efforts managed to group some individuals and municipal offices and,

eventually, resulted in establishing a public-private partnership. This was established as a local civic association (c.a.) currently associating 13 municipalities and 7 physical persons. However, none of the key players in the region (big farms) have joined this initiative so far. As explained during the interviews, their motivation is driven purely by economic benefits, which were not offered by the project. The environmental issues are not their primary interests and the poor socio-economic situation in the region enables the big farmers to set their own rules. The possible cooperation was also discredited by previous conflicts between SOS/BirdLife and fish farm owners.

The replication of the project experience - namely introduction of the floodplain management model for the restoration of wetlands, was planned to take place in other areas of Eastern Lowlands. This happened in the area of Beša polder (nearby the project area) with the assistance of the project partners. The wider replication of wetland restoration in the project area as well as anywhere else in the country is hampered by a number of factors. Firstly, it is limited by the fact that the establishment of meadows instead of arable land is bound with the obligation to have a livestock, which is a loss-making business for Slovak farmers. Secondly, the grassland process means that the value of land is decreased as the arable land is more valuable than meadows and, so far, the incentives introduced for greening through the agro-environmental subsidies are not sufficiently attractive. In addition, the farmers are not automatically entitled to receive this form of subsidy. The availability is subject to priorities and allocation of funds. The agro-environmental subsidies provided to farmers during the previous programming period 2004-2006 were much higher and the assumption was made that this would serve as an incentive for the farmers to implement alternative farming (see also Annex 12, point 8).

The legal framework introduced restrictions where, for example, compensation (for loss of fish caused by fish-catching birds) can be reimbursed to the farmers only if they are the owners of all properties including the plots. This has caused the principal conflict in Senné fish ponds where the owner of ponds does not own the plot under the fishponds and therefore is not entitled to get the compensation. The extension of the bird protection area surrounding the ponds through enlargement of grasslands is thus not acceptable to the fish pond owner. More birds in the surrounding means more damage for them, and all arguments about different types of birds (some not catching fish) are not heard. The greening process is considered by big farmers as harmful because they understand water logging as long-term flooding, which is causing problems for cattle and decreases the quality of land (its acidification).

Comparing the management of projects funded from different sources, the GEF is amongst the most flexible donors. Although the preparatory stage was longer than is common for other donors, the project is framed very widely, and very flexible rules were applied in terms of partners, reallocation of sources or adjustment of objectives according to the actual situation. The project was rather specific due to its complexity, interlinking the human resource development, environmental and economic aspects in the region. It was provided to an area which was not ready (and without this support would hardly ever be) for any assistance. The local municipalities did not communicate with each other, had no idea what to do, young people were leaving, the poor Roma population growing, and any experience or attempt to come with some ideas and apply for external sources to implement projects was completely missing.

Pilot projects of this scope (duration, content and budget) are rather unusual. Currently, national sources to support this type of project do not exist. The main sources of funding are EU Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. The present set-up of the EU funded interventions would not allow implementation of complex integrated projects as individual Calls for Proposals are much narrower as regards the objectives and eligible activities. Moreover, the rules applied would not enable reallocation of financial sources within the project (to any great extent) and the planned activities and outputs could not be changed. The same applies to the Norwegian funds and Swiss financial mechanism. All other sources are much smaller and could not fund a project of this scope.

The project was running in parallel with a few other projects, which had similar focus and were implemented in the same area. LIFE project Senné was implemented by the most active NGO operating in this area, SOS/BirdLife (budget 1,3 mil EUR, from 2005 to 2010, <http://www.life-senne.sk/>) simultaneously with the project Laborec-Uh. The bird protection area Senné is located in the centre of the project area. Part of the objectives and outputs was practically identical for both projects but the complementarity or overlaps of both projects are not clearly described in the available materials. SOS/BirdLife became the project partner and was responsible for part of the activities related to the restoration measures and training/study trips. Their involvement in the Laborec-Uh project served the purpose of sufficient co-financing for the LIFE project. After the establishment of o.z. Medzi riekami (Among the Rivers c.a.), a few other projects were prepared with the assistance of the project team but only two applications were successful. Another UNDP/GEF project was implemented by Global Water Partnership (GWP) that also became the partner of Laborec-Uh project.

The project was managed by the National Director and the executive role was delegated to the project Manager. The first Project Manager was replaced shortly after the project start due to unsatisfactory performance and, from December 2007, the project was managed by the UNDP external consultant, whose general responsibilities to support programme/project development were supplemented by the tasks to provide additional support to this project. The new Project Manager was hired in March 2008 to ensure the overall coordination among bodies at the national level. The local coordinator was hired in June 2008 to manage the project at the regional level and, eventually, from January 2011, carried out the role of the Project Manager. The overall project coordination at the national level was ensured through the Steering Committee (SC) while the local operation was followed by the Project Board. The SC fulfilled the communication requirements. Except for the official approval of the changes, budget transfers, etc. SC members were responsible for communication of the problems occurred at the local level to the top management of the respective ministries.

The management structure of the project was flat and wide - including number of partners. While most of the partners were heavily involved in the project implementation and in fact carried out most of the technical, consultancy and research work, majority of the SC members played the role of passive observers, and a few never attended meetings, or were active at the beginning and then lost the interest.

Despite that, the positive aspect of the project was that the management structures (SC, Project Board) grouped representatives of various institutions, who gradually started to see problems from different

perspectives and had to overcome the narrow perception of the problems from the view of their own organisation. The socio-economic dimension of the project was thus better accepted and brought the understanding that only local ownership of the IEM can sustain the benefits of the project. It was understood that the measures must be introduced for and with the local people.

### 3.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The long preparatory and approval process, as well as changing external environment during the project implementation, have required very flexible adjustments in the project management. Adaptive management (changes of the project activities and indicators) was widely applied. The envisaged establishment of the LAG had to be changed and replaced by the public-private partnership/civic association. The project region was not prepared for any integrated strategies and there was the lack of ownership and cooperation among local actors. Project implementation proceeded on several occasions because of the personal commitment and enthusiasm of external people. During critical periods of the project implementation, when no PM was appointed, UNDP external consultant took over PM role and managed the project<sup>2</sup>.

Because of the lack of risk mitigation strategies, the management had to seek some ad-hoc solutions and develop appropriate strategies during the implementation. The changes thus affected the project activities, for example, the mobilisation of local actors required organisation of various unplanned events (pumpkin festival, school competition<sup>3</sup>), development of the micro-grant scheme, and related numerous reallocations of financial resources within the project (see Annex 5).

Partnership arrangements among local stakeholders were crucial for the success of the project. As highlighted above, the creation of partnerships was a new phenomenon in the project region. Formally, some partnerships had existed but they were not operational. Creation of the public-private partnership within the project was a long-term process but despite all the efforts it did not attract all key players in the region (for example, the private sector, big farmers). This issue is perceived as a deficiency by the members of the partnership (see Annex 8).

The measures recommended by the mid-term evaluation were adopted to some extent. New restoration measures were introduced and study tours organised. In terms of regular monitoring, the project reports were produced quarterly and contained descriptions of some project activities or future plans and general explanations of problems/risks (risk log matrix, issue log matrix) but mostly without any updates or specification of concrete tasks – who will do what and when, and without confirmation of adopted solutions. Despite the same wording of the risks and management responses, some changed during project implementation, from non-critical to critical and back to non-critical. Management responses often contained more comprehensive information than description of individual activities and results in the reports. The lessons learned provided very similar set of information with general

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP provided additional funds to cover the role of PM

<sup>3</sup> These were covered either by SOSNA budget or external budgets (new projects)

recommendations but no specification what has been done and if the problem was sorted out or not. No principal difference between risks and lessons learned can be identified.

The overall budget of the project was 970 000 USD from GEF sources and planned co-financing in the amount of 3 349 560 USD from the sources of project partners, with the most substantial contribution of MoA 3 026 560 USD. This contribution should be processed in the form of agro-environmental subsidies to the farmers, which would be paid based on the rules set out in the Rural Development Plan (RDP) regardless of the project activities or regardless engagement of the farmers in the project. None of the subsidies was actually provided as a result of the project activities. Therefore it is doubtful whether this should be understood and reported as project co-financing. Although agro-environmental subsidies were expected to serve as special incentives supporting project activities, this was not the case and the final version of the RDP included much lower payments than assumed.

Moreover, the farmers applying for agro-environmental subsidies in the current programming period are not automatically entitled to get it. During the first year of their provision the financial resources were sufficient to cover all the applications. Afterwards, the applications exceeded the amount allocated for the support and subsidies were provided for the top three priorities, while the meadows, ranked as the fifth priority, remained without subsidies support. According to information provided by the Agriculture Paying Agency (APA)<sup>4</sup> the actual “co-financing” provided by the MoA in the form of agro-environmental subsidies (2008-2011, in the region) reached one third of the planned amount.

The co-financing according to the project team was provided as follows:

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (USD)		Government (USD)		Partner Agency (USD)		Total (USD)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
<b>Grants - KSR</b>								<b>7 419</b>
<b>SNC</b>					<b>30 000</b>	<b>30 000</b>	<b>30 000</b>	<b>30 000</b>
<b>MoA</b>					<b>3 026 560</b>	<b>*976 460</b>	<b>3 026 560</b>	<b>*976 460</b>
<b>SWME</b>					<b>150 000</b>	<b>253 000</b>	<b>150 000</b>	<b>253 000</b>
<b>Hydromelioration</b>					<b>30 000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30 000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SHMU</b>					<b>40 000</b>	<b>40 000</b>	<b>40 000</b>	<b>40 000</b>
<b>Municipalities</b>					<b>15 000</b>	<b>14 000</b>	<b>15 000</b>	<b>14 000</b>
<b>Farmers/ GAMA</b>					<b>6 000</b>	<b>10 000</b>	<b>6 000</b>	<b>10 000</b>
<b>SOS BirdLife</b>					<b>52 000</b>	<b>98 000</b>	<b>52 000</b>	<b>98.000</b>
<b>GWP</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>128 000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128 000</b>
<b>Among the Rivers</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>94 000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94 000</b>
<b>Loans/Concessions</b>								
<b>In-kind support</b>								
<b>Other</b>								
<b>Totals</b>					<b>3 349 560</b>	<b>1 643 460</b>	<b>3 349 560</b>	<b>1 650 879</b>

\*includes agro-environmental payments 2008-2011 as reported by APA (737 173 EUR)

Source: Project IR 2012

The co-financing from Hydromelioration in the sum of 30 000 USD was not provided as the measures improving the hydrological regime were implemented on the melioration channels managed by

<sup>4</sup> email correspondence

SWME. Additional sources for co-financing were provided by SWME and SOS/BirdLife. These funds were used to co-finance the restoration measures on the respective floodplain habitats. The project reported identification of new co-financing partners: Global Water Partnership (GWP), which implemented another UNDP project related to water management of Tisza (its allocation is considered as co-financing, 128 000 USD); civic association Among the Rivers also managed to succeed with an application for Norwegian Funds. The overall budget of the project (94 000 USD) is perceived as co-financing. In both cases the projects were running in parallel with Laborec–Uh project. As both projects were designed with the assistance of Laborec–Uh project, their budgets are reported as co-financing because they covered complementary activities. The overall budget of the project was increased by 7419 USD, allocated from another UNDP project implemented by Kosice Self-Governing Region (Capacity-Development for Sustainable Regional Development in the Košice Region). The supporting evidence proving provision of in-kind or financial contribution from partners is absent. A few confirmation reports (five quarterly reports from SWME and one letter from SNC) were provided with much smaller amount than reported.

Besides issues related to the reported co-financing (the funds are operated by project partners only to a limited extent, accountancy documents are not available, some financed activities have no relation to project objectives, there are some potential overlaps between projects), there are also significant differences in the reported amounts in diverse sources (project reports, UNDP and MoE data). It is not clear whether the co-financing (3 349 560 USD) was an obligatory condition for project approval and what were the reporting requirements for these matching funds.

In any case, the project documentation should provide clear evidence of co-financing level and of its eligibility. When reporting co-financing amounts, there should be also evidence provided on proportional outputs and outcomes. The project reports list only the outputs, which have been paid from the GEF sources. Moreover, the same outputs are mentioned in the reports of some parallel projects but contributions of individual projects are not always clearly explained. The project partners have diverse financial positions: some are just co-funders (mostly claiming the work done), some do not contribute but are paid for their services and some are both financially contributing and paid.

The changes in the project required subsequent re-allocation of sources and the final amount budgeted to project partners was 12% higher than planned.

Partner	Planned (USD)	Revised (USD)
SOSNA	273 500	283 400
DAPHNE	200 000	200 000
STU	106 000	106 000
SOS/BirdLife	0	87 000
GWP	0	16 500
Total	579 500	692 900

Reallocation of sources within the project components was also substantial and reflected changes in the activities and management structure. The originally planned structure of the project team was changed at the project start in order to reflect better the actual roles and tasks of all involved bodies. It

was agreed that SOSNA would cover the positions of Leader Development (Local Action Group) Manager, PR/stakeholder involvement expert, Business development expert and Workshop facilitator; DAPHNE would cover positions of Wetland Restoration Manager and Ecologist and STU would cover hydrological activities. The original partners of the project did not comprise two institutions – GWP and SOS/BirdLife. Therefore transfer of funds took place mostly in the budget lines Local consultants and Contracts on services. After the revision, the budget line for Local consultants was reduced to less than half of the original allocation while the Contracts on services was eventually nearly four times higher.

in USD	Local consultants		Contracts on services		% of overall allocation	
	Planned	Revised	Planned	Revised	Planned	Revised
Outcome 1	12 000	0	0	22 214	2,1	3,1
Outcome 2	60 000	10 265	0	131 271	11,9	14,9
Outcome 3	190 000	5 645	185 000	470 480	43,8	49,1
Outcome 4	130 000	65 851	0	60 065	24,2	16,9
Outcome 5	0	5 990	0	25 879	8,1	6,7
Total	392 000	169 386	185 000	709 909		

The investment costs related to the pilot testing of restoration measures (including change of arable land to permanent grassland vegetation and afforestation measures) represented 10,7% of the GEF project budget (103 874 USD), the overall allocation used for Micro-grant projects was over 2% (21 942 USD).

The achievements of the project were regularly reported in the quarterly reports. Self-assessment was provided at the annual basis in the PIR. Monitoring and evaluation activities are described mainly as organisation of the SC and Project Board meetings or the annual project conferences. The internal monitoring and evaluation, as part of the reporting obligations, was rather formal and general. The actual solution of problems took place in close cooperation between the project team and UNDP staff, therefore the key stakeholders were very familiar with all the project issues and there was no need to produce detailed official reporting. The SC members mostly dealt with the approval of changes in the budget but based on the minutes, did not require any detailed justification of changes. The external Mid-term evaluation was prepared in 2010. The evaluation report assessed most of the evaluation criteria as satisfactory and recommended several measures including the revision of logframe indicators and targets.

The project proposal was prepared by the UNDP external consultant and the project has been implemented in very close cooperation between UNDP staff and the project management team. The UNDP external consultant was able to substitute the PM when this post was made vacant after the dismissal of the first PM. Frequent assistance was also provided to the management of the newly established association. The UNDP became an inseparable part of the project management from the planning and design stage up to the completion of the project.

### 3.3 PROJECT RESULTS

#### RELEVANCE

*Is the Project relevant to UNCBD, RAMSAR convention, ICPDR and GEF objectives?*

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) is oriented *inter alia* to *in-situ* protection of biological diversity including species, ecosystem and genetic diversity. Landscape diversity as a result of traditional and sustainable use of land and land resources creates an inseparable part of the Convention. The project activities were targeted to ecological restoration of the landscape and sustainable land use, which is one of main objective of UNCBD.

The site of Senne Ponds is registered on the list of Ramsar sites of Slovakia, part of International Ramsar sites according the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat). The area of Ramsar site of Senne Ponds (424,6 ha) is nearly identical with National Nature Reserve (NNR) Senne ponds. The Slovak legislation on Nature and Landscape Conservation (the Act no 543/2002 Code on Nature and Landscape Conservation) does not include any reference to the Ramsar site. The core area of Ramsar site Senne Ponds is protected as NNR ponds in the fifth – the strictest level of protection. Some activities of the project were placed in the territory of Special Protection Area (SPA) (Bird Protection Area – NATURA 2000) outside of the core area of Ramsar site. These were mainly activities dealing with ecological restoration of the land – changing arable soil to meadows and pastures; and water management of existing wet meadows – seasonal artificially managed flooding and water donation to the land and soil.

The relevance to International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is reflected in the measures provided by the project and targeted to several goals – flood prevention, good ecological and chemical status of the surface water, ecosystem and integral management of the river basin (catchments area) and sustainable use of the river basin. Several project activities contributed to ICPDR – restoration of water dams and water gates (equipment for manipulation and management of water within channel grid), and a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) was prepared.

*Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?*

In general terms the project is in line with the UNDP objective “Protecting the environment” but partially touches also the objectives of “Democratic governance and Building democratic societies” (partnerships) and “Growing national capacity”. It contributes to one of the UNDP strategic objectives - empowering local partners to collaborate and lead the network (when necessary with support from UNDP). More specifically, the objectives are closely linked with the UNDP/GEF priorities where GEF provides funding to assist developing countries in meeting the objectives of international environmental conventions. The overall objective of the GEF is to secure a larger-scale and a more sustained impact on the global environment through partnerships between the country/-ies, and other



partners to implement its priorities towards global environmental objectives. Any intervention contributing to this wide objective is considered relevant.

*Is the Project relevant to Slovakia's environmental objectives?*

One of the main goals of the National Biodiversity Strategy of the Slovak Republic, prepared for UNCBD implementation, includes ecological restoration and renewal of landscape ecosystem services, while the restoration and restitution of land are part of the national environmental policy. The project objectives are also fully compliant with the objectives and priorities set in the National Wetland Policy and all EU policies related to the water management, biodiversity conservation and agriculture and rural development. The RBMP is the main management tool for part of the Bodrog water basin and will be implemented by SWME and Slovak Water Authority, both responsible by law for water management for Čierna voda basin. The RBMP was prepared in compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and it is coherent with the National Water Plan adopted by the Slovak Government.

*Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?*

Based on the interviews with the local stakeholders, the local needs are in most cases still too distant from the project objectives. The project addressed mainly the needs of nature protection while some economic and social aspects were neglected. The needs of local people were not sufficiently identified or well understood and these partially differ from the project objectives. The local people have mainly short-term economic interests while the project focuses on long-term environmental and socio-economic sustainability of the region. In addition, the external environment, namely legal and financial framework, is not supportive of long-term strategies and investments. The required changes of behaviour need a lot of information, awareness and education, and therefore this capacity building aspect of the project has a crucial importance for the overall success.

Cross-sectoral communication and partnership is another pillar necessary for feasible and sustainable solutions. Some representatives of the target groups - local farmers, small entrepreneurs, and inhabitants of the target area participated in discussions on project objectives during the preparatory stage in 2005 but only a few of them were engaged in current actions. The established civic association should become a catalyst for local development based on environmentally friendly approaches and nature protection schemes. Currently it represents municipalities and a few physical persons but the business sector (farmers, service providers, etc.) and potential intermediaries of new approaches (representatives of educational sector, youth, etc.) are still absent.

*Is the Project internally coherent in its design?*

Based on project documents review (project itself, progress reports, and mid-term evaluation), the project logic model does not provide a coherent description of the project theory of change and of the final achievements. Some expected results and activities have changed, and some results or activities are carried out by other, parallel projects. The indicators are not reported in the progress reports. Changes in project design or in external conditions are not projected into descriptions of project implementation.

The quarterly progress reports and PIRs are not fully consistent and they provide only fragmented information on selected outputs and activities. It is thus difficult to follow the complementarity of project actions and their contribution to the objectives. Some critical assumptions are mentioned in the Risk Log Matrix but mitigation strategies are not clearly designed and they are not updated. The suggested measures and their introduction as well as the final effects should have been described in the progress reports.

The reporting formats do not allow external monitoring (they do not provide relevant, consistent and evidence-based information) and the purpose of the reports (their use for decision-making process or for public relations) is thus not clear. The results achieved after five-year implementation cannot be identified on the project website [www.laborecuh.sk](http://www.laborecuh.sk). Low visibility of results indicates low transparency and in particular it endangers one of the key aims of the project – building public-private partnerships and strengthening ownership and the participation of local people. For example, the calendar of project activities has not been updated since November 2011 (in some activity clusters since November 2008).

The project objective was adjusted during the implementation to better reflect the actual situation in the targeted region and was eventually determined by the activities. The implementation itself looked more like a collection of ad-hoc actions than coherent well designed project aimed at reaching long-term sustainable results. Judging the project from the perspective of current design, the objective is largely achieved. There are some positive benefits observed, sometimes unintended, like improved communication and cooperation among diverse actors or engagement of several truly committed people in the c.a. Among the Rivers.

Unclear and/or “collective ownership” of the project was at times confusing. The wide partnership to steer the project was useful but the principal “owner” of the project was missing. Usually the project is designed by the institution, which is the future implementing body. In this case the MoE played the role of Implementing Agency but did not prepare the project and was not the idea bearer. Good project application should also contain clear management structure including names (or even CVs) of the management team to ensure that the executive Project Manager is highly committed and perfectly familiar with the project. This was neglected and caused initial problems with the project management. The project should be also based on detailed knowledge of the final beneficiaries’ needs and problems. Despite comprehensive analysis of the area, insufficient knowledge of local conditions and problems proved to be crucial during the project implementation. The project was not locally initiated, not well understood, at some stages even “unwanted” and, therefore, suffered from a number of problems (missing local capacities, low familiarity with the local needs and problems, problems with land ownership, etc.). The project outputs like strategic documents prepared were not appreciated by general public until there was something tangible delivered. The addition of three rounds of a Micro-grant scheme to the project activities proved to be one of the best promotion activities of the project.

*How is the Project complementary to activities of other stakeholders and donors active in the region?*

There were several projects running in the project area that could be considered complementary or even overlapping. All these projects were run either by the project partners (SOS/BirdLife, GWP) or stakeholders (municipality Hažín, c.a. Among the Rivers).

Project	Applicant	Donor	Budget	Duration
Conservation of Senne and Medzibodrozie SPAs in Slovakia	SOS/BirdLife	LIFE	1 300 000 EUR	2005 - 2010
Space for water (Bodrog)	GWP	UNDP/GEF	128 000 USD	2009 - 2010
Region, where people like to live	c.a. Medzi riekami	Norwegian Funds	70 000 EUR	2010 - 2011
EARTH	Municipality Hažín	ENPI	147 000 EUR	2011 - 2013
Let's not forget	c.a. Medzi riekami	SPP Foundation	2 000 EUR	2011

With the exception of the LIFE project, all others were designed in cooperation with the project team. The projects were therefore focused on activities that could, to some extent, complement and support the activities of Laborec–Uh project, mainly the capacity building efforts. The LIFE and UNDP projects carried out small investment activities (repair of floodgates). Some of the outputs reported within the Laborec–Uh project have also appeared at the web pages of LIFE project where they were presented as LIFE project achievements without any reference to cooperation with the Laborec–Uh project or clarification how the work was shared. Equally, numerous outputs of other projects were reported in the Laborec–Uh project reports. This presentation of outputs does not allow the separation and attribution of outputs to individual projects.

*How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?*

If the priorities set out in the Integrated Local Development Strategy (ILDS) by the local stakeholders are taken into account then the most convenient and highly appreciated approach would be to reduce the wide scope of the project – narrow the focus and concentrate on small investment activities, which are more visible and can serve as practical examples to be followed by others. Complementary projects could deal with technical issues such as water management, hydrology, mapping of biotopes, etc.

The main constraint on the project was that the aims and priorities were imposed from outside, without true participatory identification of problems and needs of the target groups. Threats and real opportunities were underestimated. Therefore all these issues had to be addressed during the project implementation. These aspects are the most important lessons learned, to be used for identification and formulation of any future project.

**In general, the project seems to be more relevant to the strategic objectives of the UNDP/GEF than to the concrete needs and expectations of local people. But, it opened an important cross-sectoral discussion on local priorities and appropriate solutions, and thus the project can be rated as relevant.**

## OVERALL RESULTS (ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES)

The achievement of the project objectives is assessed from the perspective of two sets of objectives: the new objective/purpose determined in the project documentation and the informal objective, as understood by the main project stakeholders.

When judging the achievement of the project purpose set out in the revised logframe, which was the ***innovative stakeholder partnership that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme***, we conclude that it has been achieved. The implementation of environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods and expansion of (semi) natural floodplain habitats can continue to be managed by the established c.a. in compliance with the prepared ILDS while the water management still lies with the SWME.

The pilot project tried **to identify problems in the water and land management, suggest some partial solutions and identify sources of finance to implement proposed measures**. This was eventually the feasible purpose of the project due to the actual restrictions; this was also the aim, which was achieved. The difference between the ambitious design (including inappropriate outcomes and indicators) and actual implementation does not permit an evaluation based on the comparison of the planned and achieved. Therefore the rating is based on the re-constructed project logic.

Although the project purpose concerning a functioning public-private partnership was achieved through the establishment of the civic association Among the Rivers, it was not created by the wide range of stakeholders (across all administrative levels) as the current members are municipal offices and private persons only. Nevertheless, the partnership exists and is operational. Based on the questionnaire for members of the civic association, there is an average rating for most aspects of its operations, with some dissatisfaction in the field of participation and engagement of local actors and the generation of resources. The respondents are moderately satisfied with leadership, communication, their own engagement, predictions of sustainability, and fairness with funds distribution (see Annex 8 for more details). It is expected that the civic association will become the key player of local development.

Under the supervision of SOSNA, the civic association Among the Rivers has participated in the preparation of the ILDS. This document and the Action Plan of the c.a. for the years 2012-2014 plan investments exceeding five million EUR. Most of the planned funds are external sources from the EU Structural Funds. These are unlikely to offer much financial support as the current programming period is over in 2013 and the new period will take time to commence. Moreover, the applicants submitting proposals have to prove their history, financial viability, eligibility conditions and have to manage the high administrative burden coming with the project. These conditions might be difficult to fulfil for the newly established and less experienced body. Taking into account the overall value of financial sources generated with the assistance of the whole project team (including partners and UNDP) during the five year duration of the project, the proposed amount is not realistic.

Support for the achievement of objectives using the indicators has not been possible because the indicators were not well determined (see Annex 11). None of the stated indicators measure the achievement of the purpose. In addition, the comments describing achieved indicators in the PIR do not report the actual status (figures) but provide description of running or planned activities (e.g. a list

of conferences instead of the number of visitors of the information centre for the outcome 4). Sometimes, the same data are reported for different level indicators (e.g. business plans for the overall objective and outcome 3; instead of the registered enterprises). Moreover, some of the outputs are reported by both Laborec-Uh and LIFE projects, but the explanation of their respective contribution to this achievement is missing (e.g. reinforcement of embankments financed from the LIFE project is reported for overall objective and outcome 3).

As regards the main objective referring to the *mainstreaming of the integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors of new EU members and accession states...*, the project should contribute to the achievement of this objective in a long-term perspective. Based on the achievement of the project purpose, we conclude that the contribution of the project to the main objective will take time and is likely to be marginal. Some of the outcome indicators stated in the logframe could qualify as the impact indicators but data indicating progress needs to be established, collected and monitored.

**In general, the overall rating of the achievements of objectives is moderately satisfactory – most promising are the outcomes in building capacities/partnerships (outcome 2) and in piloting conservation practices (outcome 3) while fulfilment of other outcomes related to practical adoption of long-term strategies and replication of best practices (outcomes 1 and 4) depends on many external factors beyond the influence of project team. Their success can be assessed only later.**

## EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY

*To what extent are the outputs and activities of the project consistent with the intended project objective and goal?*

The intervention logic of the project is confusing and does not properly distinguish activities, outputs and outcomes. The project purpose is only partly reflected in the outcomes. While the purpose mentions establishment of the partnership, the outcomes (in most cases actually outputs) refer to the adoption of a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices, stakeholders' capacity to implement IEM, pilot testing of biodiversity conservation practices and replication of best IEM practices.

In reality the project activities were split into four components. The first one focused on the preparation of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for micro-basin of Čierna Voda River. The plan was eventually approved but is not financially covered and it is not a binding document (see Annex 12, point 7). The second, most substantial group of activities was focused on the human resource development/capacity building with an aim of changing the thinking of local actors, put people together, teach them how to cooperate, and eventually to assist them with the preparation of an ILDS based on local needs. The third part covered the implementation of the restoration activities and the last part comprised promotion/public awareness and replication activities.

*To what extent have implemented outputs produced or contributed to attaining the expected outcomes?*

Following the changes in the project design, which adjusted the activities to better respond to actual situation, most of the outputs were delivered without substantial problems. The outcomes, however, need more time to materialise. The visible benefits of the RBMP implementation remain questionable due to the land ownership problems, and state budget restrictions to carry out the proposed measures. The partnership is the most remarkable achievement and clearly proves that the progress was achieved. As noted by local stakeholders *“a few years ago it would be simply impossible to establish any association”*. Although the future operation of the association is not yet secure and still needs some assistance to survive, the changes are obvious. The ILDS needs some adjustment to become more realistic but was prepared by the local actors and reflects the local needs. The completed investment measures are likely to bring tangible environmental benefits (see Annex 4) and these should be expected if these measures are replicated in other places. A less positive picture is provided by substantial number of studies and analysis, which did not find wide practical application, yet (see Annex 12).

*How was risk and risk mitigation being managed?*

The project design did not pay sufficient attention to risk mitigation strategies. Some of the risks became critical and seriously threatened project implementation. Ad hoc solutions had to be sought to resolve the problems and eventually led to the change of project design. With the flexible management approach of the donor, these changes were accepted and the project proceeded. However, the adopted solutions are not properly reflected in the Risk Log Matrix. This part should have provided a clear description of the problem, suggested solution/measure, as well as an explanation about the application of the proposed measure; when and with what effect was the problem resolved.

*What lessons have been learnt for the Project to achieve its outcomes?*

The project strategy followed the approach of implementing what was locally feasible rather than seeking applicable solutions of identified problems and their causes. All development projects should start with participatory identification of the needs, stakeholders, objectives and appropriate strategies (logical framework approach), and project design must reflect a realistic theory of change, including realistic assumptions and risks (including assumptions related to national policy framework). This project was too ambitious and designed with the indicators which were not adequately determined (not corresponding to the outcome level). Based on evidence from the interviews, the problems faced during the implementation drove the project in the direction which proved feasible, and not much attention was paid to the original design of the project. All the efforts concentrated on the achievement of several outputs – RBMP, establishment of the c.a., preparation of the ILDS and restoration measures.

The outcomes were not correctly specified and therefore are difficult to assess. The visible outcomes come from capacity building activities, and improved conditions will be most likely observed at the places with the changed water management regime (see Annex 12, point 9). The experience shows that capacity building efforts are time-consuming, require a lot of effort to change the old thinking, close cooperation with the local people, and provision of incentives to motivate them. To implement

the planned water management, the land ownership needs to be sorted out, and related legal measures must be in place.

*What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the Project in order to improve the achievement of the Project's expected results?*

The most important change would be to re-design the project with the correct intervention logic, setting proper outputs and objectives. The project should have been more focused on the identified problems and proposed solution to the problems encountered, such as land ownership, big farmers' reluctance to cooperate, involvement of fish pond owners, introduction of incentives, etc. These were the biggest constraints for the project as the activities could not be carried out without the agreement of the respective land owners, there were no local capacities available, and the economic incentives to introduce (for example) agro-environmental farming were also absent. The re-design of the project objectives ensured that the best possible results could be achieved under the given circumstances and they correspond to the set objective.

*Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?*

Adaptive management was crucially important for the implementation of the project. The project would be most likely cancelled at the beginning of its implementation if the standard rigid management methods had been applied. Changes in the activities (some excluded, some additional) and substantial reallocation of financial sources were generous. The period when the project was run by the UNDP external consultant, to safeguard its existence, was also quite exceptional. Nevertheless, without adaptive management the project would not have been completed.

*Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?*

The accounting and financial system was in place but in the wide management structure it was complicated and did not provide timely information. The PM was located in Bratislava/Michalovce, the National Project Director was placed at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute in Bratislava and accounting was carried out by the Headquarters of SWME in Banská Štiavnica. This set up made access to timely and accurate information even more complicated.

There was a lack of reliable and easily accessible information on project co-financing. The financial data reported in the project reports were not fully consistent. The co-financing has not been documented through the accountancy records. Some of the partners provided quarterly reports summarising all conducted activities and their overall expenditure, some provided a statement on the overall co-financing but in most cases there were no documents recording the provision of these funds and their eligibility regarding the project purpose and implementation<sup>5</sup>. The description of the MoA's substantial contribution as co-financing is questionable. Provision of agro-environmental subsidies had no direct relation to the project. Although they were expected to serve as a motivation tool, their rules prevented this. The APA reported provision of agro-environmental subsidies for all farmers in the

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. provided quarterly report of SWME confirm provision of 40 190 USD, reported amount is 236 600 USD, the same for SNC confirmation provided for 3948 USD, reported 30 000 USD

project region in the amount 976 460 USD (about one third of the planned funds), while project data refer 2 800 000 USD.

*Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?*

The progress reports were produced quarterly and for the staff directly involved in the day-to-day implementation and those who were familiar with the project, were considered sufficient. For outsiders, the information provided in the reports was not considered sufficient. The reporting obligations should require less frequency, a simplified approach, but more substantial content.

The quarterly reports did not provide detailed information about the project activities and results (dates of events, number of participants etc. in chronological order). The same activities were not always reported under the same outputs. It was not sufficiently clear when the latest revision of the project was completed and whether the revised logframe or list of outputs is available (Annexes to SC meeting are not sufficient)<sup>6</sup>. While the narrative part of the reports contained only the latest quarter, often describing plans instead activities carried out, the appended Risk log matrix and Issue Log Matrix comprised all details in chronological order. However, most of the presented information has a little relevance to the real progress and the “Risks” can be hardly recognized from the “Issues”. In addition, the same risks and countermeasures were changing from critical or non-critical and vice versa according to the date but the updates of countermeasures are not sufficient and do not allow an up-to-date assessment of the actual situation. For example, the issue identified in 2007 and with “no change” status until the last quarterly report (3 Q 2012) still mentions payments in SKK while Slovakia introduced EUR in 2009. Lessons learned mostly describe only general recommendations (to improve communication, to develop a plan...) and do not identify the true causes of problems (mainly missing ownership) or replicable solutions. The format of the reports is not appropriate for ongoing monitoring and provides too little information for the decision-making process or for public project promotion.

The format of PIRs is not user-friendly. The report is difficult to read, and it is not easy to follow the project progress according to plan; the content is very general, and the relation to progress reports is not clear. It is thus difficult to estimate how the reported data were used and what decisions were based on them.

*Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)?*

The cost effectiveness of the project has changed. The original budget lines have been adjusted following the changes of activities but also due to the change in the project structure where internal staff was replaced by external partners. The external services thus have been four times more costly than planned while internal experts disbursed less than half of the original allocation. The overall management cost did not change. The reallocation among budget lines took place within respective project components and the eventual increase of the budget for individual components/outcomes reached the 5% maximum. Overall, the provision of external and internal services (studies, strategies, analyses, capacity building activities, etc.) represent roughly 74% of the budget, of that: investment

<sup>6</sup> Even the evaluation ToR does not contain the latest changes



activities represented 10,7% (nine restoration measures) and the micro-grant scheme 2,4% of the total GEF budget.

*Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned?*

The leveraging of funds is understood more generously than is common for other donors (co-financing comprises the total of cash and in-kind resources committed by governments, other multilateral or bilateral sources, the private sector, NGOs, the project beneficiaries and the relevant GEF agency, all of which are essential for meeting the GEF project objectives<sup>7</sup>). Also funds provided by other donors to the project partners and other stakeholders in the project area for similar type of projects were reported as the sources of co-financing (see above). Part of the provided sources is declared as co-financing on the basis of the written confirmation from the partners. On several occasions, provision of funds from other donors/sources (such as Norwegian Funds, UNDP/GEF or LIFE) for the projects run by the partners in the region were declared as co-financing in various proportion of the overall budget.

The planned co-financing has not been provided by the Hydromelioration while the additional sources came from the GWP and civic association, which were not originally involved as project partners. The transfer of unused funds from the project of Kosice Self-governing region (supporting establishment of LAGs in the region) was provided as co-financing. The most substantial co-financing was planned in the form of agro-environmental subsidies. The expectations that new programming period 2007-2013 would provide more advantageous subsidies did not materialise and the eventual co-financing, reported by the Agriculture Paying Agency in the period 2008-2011, reached one third of the original sum. Nevertheless, the provision of subsidies was planned and provided without any direct link or relation to the project, therefore it is doubtful if this should be reported as co-financing.

*Were the findings, lessons learned and recommendations shared among Project stakeholders, UNDP and GEF staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement?*

All information concerning the project was regularly shared with the project stakeholders and UNDP staff during the Project Board and SC meetings. The lessons learned and recommendations were part of the regular reporting obligations; however the feedback or recommendation tracking system is missing. Project reports were prepared quarterly for the UNDP while PIR were reported on annual basis to GEF. To provide information about the project activities, the web page of the project was made operational (January 2009) and electronic monthly Newsletter was launched in October 2008. The established c.a. took over the responsibilities related to publishing and distribution of the Newsletter in June 2010. Except for the Newsletter and information on some events, the website is not updated, the plan of activities has not changed since November 2010 (in some parts since November 2008), and there is no information on the results achieved. As regards the content of the findings, lessons learned and recommendations contained in the project reports, this information was inconsistent (sometimes irrelevant) and incomplete.

*Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?*

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.thegef.org/gef/policy/co-financing>

The gender issue has not been the subject of the project implementation.

*Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Can be considered sustainable?*

The partnership building was one of the key components of the project. The originally proposed LAG was not established as the time to gather the people and prepare the strategy was very short and the local resources for cooperation were absent. There was no communication among the municipalities and people in the region. To continue the project activities, it was agreed to establish public-private partnership/civic association, which would play a similar role to the LAG. This has facilitated the implement a wide scope of activities funded from various sources.

After the series of small community and team building, capacity building and other events, local sources were mobilised and the c.a. Among the Rivers was established. The questionnaire distributed to the members of the Association indicated the strong and weak features of the partnership (see Annex 8). Despite all the efforts the partnership is still missing key players from the private sector. The functioning of c.a. has recently been jeopardised by the lack of external sources as the project applications prepared by the association were not successful. The new Project Manager should be employed to run the partnership from January 2013 and this person will be crucial to ensure future operation and sustainability. Although the c.a. is functioning and the members are committed, the support will be needed for next 2-3 years period to ensure its independent operation. The UNDP has already managed to secure additional sources to support further activities in the area through its Community Development and Knowledge Management (COMDEKS) initiative. Six project proposals have been already submitted for the selection. Their activities were suggested and/or planned in the strategic documents prepared by the project.

**Highly flexible adaptive project management enabled gradual reallocations of the budget. The expected outputs were reached but the costs of services were higher than planned. The co-financing sources cannot be fully documented and partly include sources (MoA) that have no direct relation to the project. The efficiency is thus rated as moderately satisfactory.**

**Regarding effectiveness, the survey among stakeholders confirmed the start of some changes that might contribute in the long term to the set strategic objectives although these objectives cannot be reached by the end of project implementation. The effectiveness can be rated as moderately satisfactory. Nevertheless, it should be noted that self-sustaining water and land management programme has the form of two separate documents (RBMP and ILDS) which are complementary but are managed by two separate entities with limited possibilities for cooperation.**

## COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

To reflect the country ownership, the GEF activities should be based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development and the global environment. As stated above, the project objectives were compliant with all obligations resulting from the EU Directives and international conventions as well as from national policies. Most of the national priorities are being developed with the assistance of GEF initiatives. Slovakia participated in several UNDP/GEF projects assisting countries with the

development of sustainable water management or integrated strategies e.g. “Strengthening the Implementation Capacities for Nutrient Reduction and Transboundary Cooperation in the Danube River Basin” or “Establishment of Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River Basin”.

The project was compliant with international conventions and overall national policies, but the local ownership was not ensured by the start of project implementation as the genuine interest (and commitments) of the target groups, local capacities as well as conditions of enabling environment (legal framework, effective national strategies and predictable incentives) were missing. However, one of the most important contributions of the project was a special focus on empowering and engaging of local actors and on facilitating cross-sectoral communication and cooperation.

**In this regard, Country ownership at the end of the project is rated as satisfactory.**

## MAINSTREAMING

The current understanding of mainstreaming includes the extent to which national policies and resources (and both indirect and direct UNDP services) are mobilized to secure given global environmental objectives<sup>8</sup>. The original project intentions in this sense succeeded only partially. The project did not manage to incorporate biodiversity principles into the current RDP. Although one of the partners (DAPHNE)<sup>9</sup> is currently part of the working group for the preparation of the RDP measures for years 2014-2020, it is not possible to predict whether biodiversity principles will be incorporated as these are eventually subject to political decisions.

The preparation of the ILDS demonstrated the integrated approach to local stakeholders. Its future life will depend on the leadership of c.a. Among the Rivers; this is the main driving force for the implementation of the ILDS. It will depend on the ability to identify local, and apply for external sources, ability to build “collective spirit/aims” and engage all relevant stakeholders (including national and self-government authorities) in the further development and implementation of ILDS. Technical support with the preparation of business plans for six small enterprises to adapt existing production systems in order to better conserve biodiversity and build on traditional knowledge was provided, but the final outcomes cannot be reported yet. The small demonstration projects to educate local communities were eventually implemented through the Micro-grant scheme.

On the other hand, some of the planned benefits, such as strengthening of SNC institutional capacities to integrate biodiversity conservation objectives into sector planning and growth strategies at local and national scales, or integrating conservation objectives in cross-sectoral spatial planning systems at the landscape level, including poverty alleviation strategies, are not very visible. Not much has been done for awareness of decision-makers across public institutions and private enterprises on economic and

<sup>8</sup> Integrating GEF-related global environmental objectives into UNDP managed programmes and operations, <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF.C.13.4.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> DAPHNE takes part in RDP preparation as a representative/nominee of the third sector

social benefits of biodiversity conservation, for the introduction of pilot payment schemes for ecological services to compensate resource used for ecological benefits, or for the establishment of integrated extension systems, which was originally assumed in the project document.

The main limitation for mainstreaming the project approaches, benefits and experience is still the unresolved issue of land ownership. As the process of the land restitution is not completed, the Slovak Land Fund is managing agriculture land of unidentified owners, which is often rented to big farmers. Dominant farmers are often successors of the former socialist agriculture cooperative farms, managing large areas. Their attitude to farming is mostly business-oriented and driven by financial incentives. The small farms are more traditional and linked with nature. Nevertheless, all project activities implemented in the field can be carried out only with the agreement of the land owner or renters. The integrated management thus requires agreement of all farmers and businesses managing the land in the area affected by the implemented measures. Therefore, even the state-owned land which is rented cannot be (for example) flooded without prior approval of the farmers. The state or regional interests are thus subject of agreement from numerous private persons or businesses.

**The project results in this field are moderately satisfactory.**

## SUSTAINABILITY

*Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?*

The project design did not address the sustainability issue. The outputs produced are not automatically converted into long-term results and cannot guarantee sustainability of the project benefits. Moreover, it is necessary to stress that the situation in the region has not substantially changed in last decade. The abandoned and empty houses in the villages confirm that this is not a prosperous area. The statistics for number of citizens do not show this trend as the leavers are quickly replaced by Roma communities.

The sustainability of the produced RBMP is questionable. The plan should be implemented by SWME but the financial sources are not secured. The establishment of the c.a. is a successful outcome, which required much more effort than originally assumed. Although it is currently operational and its members are proud and enthusiastic to continue, there are two factors influencing the future existence: sources to keep it fully operational and respected, and creative leadership to manage this partnership.

The ILDS is unlikely to materialize as currently planned. While the priorities are well determined, the proposed implementation relies heavily on external financial sources which are not very realistic (too much required, difficult access, uncertain availability). The sources from current Structural Funds must be committed by the end of 2013 and the measures supported in the new programming period are not known<sup>10</sup>. The ILDS was approved by 14 municipal councils and although it is not a legally binding

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<sup>10</sup> There are efforts to exclude from future EU support all regions with degressive growth; this assistance should be provided solely from national sources.

document, the monitoring mechanism (who, what, when and how) to follow its implementation progress would indicate its sustainability.

The most sustainable benefits of the project can bring the restoration activities – change of arable soil to permanent grassland (wet meadows or pastures) and water donation to grasslands as well afforestation measures. The limiting factor for successful replication of these activities is clearly the willingness of big farmers to cooperate, and the land ownership issue. However, the benefits introduced through these measures are likely to be sustained. The technical equipment will require maintenance.

*Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?*

As emphasized above, the financial and economic issues are key pre-requisites to sustain some benefits of the project. This is especially true for the RBMP implementation where investments are required to implement the planned measures. The state budget restrictions enable very limited investments, and mostly for “burning issues”, while most of the preventive measures are put on the waiting list and can be implemented provided that some external sources are made available (EU, Norwegian Funds, etc.). The ILDS is in a similar situation. The Action plan 2012-2014 relies on external funds, which will not be provided to the projected extent. Some financial sources for small interventions in the region were secured by UNDP and will be delivered through the GEF Small Grants Programme - COMDEKS initiative funded by Japan Biodiversity Fund. The financial sustainability is temporarily assured for the c.a. operation. Hopefully, contributions by municipalities will be cheaper than relying on external consultancy companies, which would be even more costly if they are externally contracted to prepare project applications and/or manage the successful projects.

*Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support?*

Most of the project partners are either state institutions or well-established non-governmental organisations with the long history. Therefore it can be expected that these partners will continue their activities. The project partners will thus most probably continue in similar projects in the future but it is not likely that they will continue in the same partnership structure and to the same extent. The only partner with unsecure future is the newly established c.a. that is facing potential risks described above.

*Are laws, policies and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?*

The project document does not describe any intention to address laws, policies or other national frameworks. The SC composition was a good platform to attempt the preparation of some proposals for the national policy level, based on the experience gained during the project implementation, but this opportunity was not used. Although some partners are directly engaged in introducing new policies (MoE, MoA), their involvement in the project was reduced to assistance with small problems during the implementation. The project as such had no intention to seek and analyse the causality and/or suggest some generally applicable solutions for the problems faced during the implementation. By coincidence, the participation of DAPHNE (representing third sector) in the working group preparing proposals for future EU assistance means that project experience can be communicated to the national level. The “virtual” co-financing (provided by MoA from EU funds) did not create ownership. Provided that state budget sources are allocated in this amount to co-finance any project,

the MoA would probably expect much more benefits than established regional partnership and elaborated strategies.

*Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?*

The national capacities have practically no influence on sustainability of the project results. Part of the benefits provided in the form of RBMP is managed by the regional offices of SWME (Michalovce and Košice) that dispose of human capacities but lack the financial sources to ensure sustainability. The visible progress was achieved in capacity building at the local level. The local sources were mobilised and adopted the ideas which were very different from previous years (traditional farming, revitalisation of ponds, ...). The sustainability of c.a. and ILDS is described in detail above.

*Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?*

So far, one replication of the project activities was reported. DAPHNE has prepared a management plan for another area nearby (Beša) utilizing the experience from the Laborec-Uh project. SNC together with SOS/BirdLife then implemented some of the measures proposed in the management plan for the SPA. Similar activities, to a much more limited extent, are carried out in other regions but the replication of such a complex intervention is unlikely. However, it is important to use the lessons learned, in particular in the field of empowering local ownership and participation of the target groups in creating and introducing local development strategies.

*What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results?*

In general, the main factor hindering sustainability of results is availability of financial resources – namely in relation to the implementation of developed strategic documents (ILDS, RBMP). Newly appointed leader will be crucial for the successful operation of the established partnership. Apart from the identified limits there are a number of external issues affecting sustainability of results. These are mainly questions related to the enforcement of the national strategies/policies and availability of sources for their implementation, the rules for the provision of subsidies and other tools that can potentially influence the motivation to implement integrated water and land management.

**In general, the sustainability of benefits can be rated as moderately unlikely.**

## IMPACT

*Will the project achieve its long-term goal to mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors?*

The project results may contribute to the achievement of the long-term goal but the extent of this contribution is difficult to estimate. To achieve this goal a set of complex policies (concerning environment, agriculture, water management etc.) at the national level have to be agreed. Strategic papers mostly exist but their enforcement and implementation is lagging.

*What is the level of sensitization and awareness about the integrated ecosystem management (IEM) approach?*

Although there were no opinion polls organised to assess the level of awareness, based on the interviews with the project stakeholders some progress in this respect has been achieved. The initial ideas of the project team emphasizing traditions, revitalisation of water spaces, growth of alternative crops, which were not well received at the beginning of the project, eventually found supporters and have been promoted by local people.

*What is the impact of the demonstrated approach in private, public and/or at individual levels?*

So far, the project has had no significant impact on the private sector. The key private farmers in the region refused cooperation with the project and no special strategy has been developed to intensify dialog with these farmers or to identify potential options of how to engage them. Solutions on how to compensate damage on fish farms caused by birds, have not been dealt with. It is expected that some positive effects will appear at least for the six small businesses, which started with the implementation of developed business plans. The most significant impact should be visible at the public level. The mutual cooperation and communication has remarkably improved and the c.a. established is expected to sustain the project benefits.

*Were cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation?*

The crosscutting issues like environment protection, good governance, inclusiveness, and cross-sectoral cooperation were integral aspects of project design. Unfortunately, they could be reflected only to a limited extent due to significant constraints, partially caused by underestimated local ownership and local limitations (unpreparedness of the region) at the formulation and inception stages of the project.

*How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?*

The project has a big potential to apply the lessons learned for future initiatives, if all the key issues identified - such as importance of local ownership and realistic assessment of risks and assumptions - are considered. The experience gained by the c.a. in managing the micro-grant scheme and its active involvement in organisation of small community activities and projects implementation under the supervision of Laborec-Uh project is the best lesson.

**In general, the project created some important conditions that may contribute to the planned impacts and is rated as moderately satisfactory in this regard.**

### **3.4 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS**

After summarising the evaluation findings, the main problems and obstacles to implementation, proposals are made for measures and/ or lessons learned that could be applied in future UNDP/GEF projects. These are dealt with in the following clusters:

### **Project design, implementation, monitoring, and administration**

The intervention logic of the project suffered from numerous problems: the ambitious objective, confusing outputs and outcomes, underestimated risks, misleading assumptions and lack of correctly determined indicators. Usually the projects activities are designed to produce outputs which lead to the achievement of outcomes and eventually in long-term contribute to impacts. In this case the original design did not follow the logic and the redesign of the project was conducted the other way around.

The duration of the project could have been much shorter if the planning had been done well, i.e. risks identified by the stakeholders' analysis are taken into account, and mitigation strategies are prepared in advance. The project justification contained a detailed analysis of the socio-economic situation and geographic description, but the analysis of key issues necessary for the original aim - Integrated Ecosystem Management was missing. One of the most important obstacles to carry out environmental or agricultural measures is the land ownership, which was not addressed.

The agro-environmental subsidies in the new programming period were much lower than in the previous one. The assumption that this would provide sufficient incentive for the farmers to change the arable soil to the grasslands, failed. Moreover, increase of grasslands meant the obligation to keep livestock, which is not profitable and, in addition, agro-environmental subsidies were subject to external approval. The project thus lost economic incentives, which are a prerequisite for wetland restoration. All agro-environmental subsidies in the region, which were officially declared as co-financing, had no direct relation to the project activities.

It is therefore recommended that any future assistance provided from GEF sources must include project logframe which is prepared in compliance with general rules. The project purpose must be realistic, feasible and relevant; outputs, outcomes and impacts must be properly designed and monitored through the appropriate indicators. Risks and assumptions have to be estimated and strategies prepared to deal with changes in assumptions and to minimise/eliminate risks if they appear.

If the introduction of an Integrated Ecosystem Management is considered, it should be pilot tested, and a comprehensive analysis identifying positive and negative influences of all involved actors on IEM should be carried out at the beginning of the design stage. This should propose the most suitable options how to tackle the problems, instead avoiding them, and to plan the appropriate project activities. The analysis should also provide clarification of the legal and ownership rights to indicate what measures are feasible and where. If large scale measures are to be carried out, the possibilities for compensating the owners or purchasing the plot must be analysed.

The proposed analysis would most likely identify the principal conflict between commercial fish ponds and the neighbouring SPA. As this conflict is unlikely to be sorted speedily, a project of this type should include a cost-benefit analysis to suggest what is more beneficial for the region: to keep the fish ponds and abolish the SPA or vice-versa, and prepare the scenarios how to do it. It needs to be noted that the cross-compliance principle must be kept. Therefore it is not acceptable to provide direct payments to farmers if basic standards concerning the environment, animal and plant health and animal welfare as well as the requirement of maintaining land in good agricultural and environmental



conditions are not ensured. In this respect, both MoE and MoA as the project partners should seek a solution at the policy level, as outlined in this recommendation.

The project reporting obligations were quite substantial but do not always provide necessary information (quarterly and annual reports, minutes from SC meetings and Project Board meetings). The quarterly reports repeated several pages without any substantial change; description of activities and results was rather brief providing limited information for the project monitoring. Format of the PIR is not user-friendly and difficult to read. The reallocation of funds was frequent and provision of co-financing was not sufficiently documented. The project partners had very different roles and their contribution to the project activities and co-financing varied. Two new partners joined the project during the implementation. Simultaneously running projects often reported identical outputs without explanation as to the contribution of individual projects.

To improve the administration of such a project we would recommend the introduction of the following measures. The simplification of reporting formats should be considered, i.e. the reports should contain description of activities undertaken including the details (dates, number of participants, etc.); risks and lessons learned should describe the measures introduced and their effects; the whole report should contain information either in chronological order, or for the respective reporting period. Provided that UNDP staff is present at the working meetings, the frequency of these reports can be reduced to 6 months period. More attention should be paid to the reallocation of resources to avoid the significant increases within the budget lines. Provision of co-financing should be properly documented.

Summary recommendations on corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of similar projects (recommendations for UNDP/GEF):

- The objectives and strategies of the projects must reflect the actual conditions, realistic assumptions (including legal frameworks and financial incentives) and, in particular, the needs of all intended beneficiaries – who must participate in project design to obtain local ownership.
- Project logic (theory of change) and the responsibility of all actors should be clear from the project document, monitoring indicators should be realistic and appropriate. The intervention logic should set out relevant and feasible project purpose. The project activities should produce outputs leading eventually to outcomes, i.e. to the achievement of the project purpose. The achievement of the purpose should be measured through determined outcome indicators (one or max. two for each outcome). The indicators should be quantified, measurable, and measured. If possible, the monitoring data should be collected at minimal expense with regular frequency and from publicly available sources. If necessary, ex-ante evaluation mechanism should be introduced to ensure quality of the proposals.
- Smaller and clearly focused projects are more appropriate than complex projects for rural areas with poor capacities and limited experience. Therefore small grant scheme interventions with clear priorities could be launched to initiate the development of local capacities.

- Complex projects like Laborec–Uh must ensure that the necessary interventions at the national policy level are identified and secured. The integrated strategies cannot be implemented if the elementary problems e.g. ownership issues, are not sorted.
- The reporting format must allow monitoring of project progress (and expenditure) and reflect decision-making needs (there must be a feedback/response if required). Reporting twice a year is sufficient, urgent issues can be solved by the means of “control days” or specific topic-oriented reports. Co-financing can be reported only on the basis of supporting documents clearly indicating financial amount or total value of cash or in-kind provision for each individual partner.

### **Reinforcing initial benefits - Capacity building and introducing appropriate national policies**

The original assumptions about the willingness of local people to cooperate were not confirmed. Project activities dealing with the preparation of some of the strategies could not attract local citizens. The intention of the project to establish the local partnership – civic association, took much longer than intended and required more efforts than planned. It was very difficult to find local leaders. The lack of capacities did not allow the preparation of ILDS shortly after the project start and it had to be postponed.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, one of the key points identified during the mid-term evaluation: *project success is much more likely when the project concept originates from and is supported by local stakeholders from the beginning*<sup>11</sup> is very relevant. However, the question remains of what to do if there is no chance of starting any activity due to the absence of local capacities, which was the case of the project. These regions need a special approach.

In such cases there are basically two options:

- The assistance provided to the region should start with small project/community activities. The micro-grant scheme would be a reasonable instrument to motivate the local communities because small investments are visible and serve as a good promotion tool. This approach might require more time but is likely to bring sustainable benefits.
- The pilot project of similar scope can be implemented provided that it is run by the team of full-time professionals. The team would be located directly in the region and would also deal with the capacity building activities to assure the sustainability of the project. The external staff may have the advantage of better conflict management and negotiation skills.

To reinforce the initial project benefits the following measures at the local level should be considered:

- The full-time Project Manager should be employed by the c.a. Among the Rivers.
- In cooperation with the Management Board the fundraising activities should be initiated.
- Where possible, the management sources of the c.a. should be used to administer the projects which will succeed in the COMDEKS initiative.

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<sup>11</sup> Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands), mid-term evaluation, October 2010

- The activities of the c.a. should focus on small community activities which are less financially demanding but also prepare/design more complex regional interventions and seek for potential sources.
- A strategy on how to engage big farms in the c.a. activities should be prepared.
- The networking and cooperation with the well established NGOs in the region/Eastern Slovakia could bring some useful experience, knowledge and resources.
- As the project organized regular conferences to assess the achievements, it would be helpful if the national implementing entity - MoE could organize regional conference in 2016 to assess the results and progress attained from the end of the project.

The achievement of the main objective requires a long-term effort supported by the enforcement of the national policies and secured by financial resources. The progress in achieving of the strategic objectives is not obvious and not easy to measure. Therefore the national/regional public administration bodies responsible for the sustainable development in the Slovak Republic should introduce a monitoring mechanism comprising social, economic and environmental indicators to allow regular assessment of the progress achieved.

Summary recommendations on actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project (recommendations for implementing organisations)

- The main positive outcome of the project is the existence of a competent civic association. It is important to focus on its sustainability – on strengthening human resources, improving capability to address external financial resources and on engaging more local actors, in particular from the private sector. This cannot be achieved without some additional financial support in the next few years. National and regional strategies/policies affecting the non-governmental sector will only be delivered through financial incentives.
- Pilot implementations and their environmental and socio-economic impacts must be monitored after the end of the project and corrective actions introduced if needed. Supervision by local (or national) authorities is highly recommended.
- The visibility of project results must significantly improve. The project website does not offer relevant and coherent information on project approaches and results.

### **Best and worst practices**

Finally, to identify the best and worst practices relating to the relevance, it needs to be stressed that the project was relevant but the intervention logic following adoption of the objective to the activities undertaken cannot be considered good practice. On the other hand, faced with a desperate situation in the region the eventual operation of the local partnership is a successful achievement.

Lessons learned reflecting best and worst practices addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success can be summarised as follows:

- The success of any intervention depends on local actors. It is important to prepare the region, to start with small partnership/community building activities, and only when interest comes from the region, to start with developing integrated strategies. Small steps with participatory

and learning-by-doing approaches are better than one big complex project understandable only to few people and external consultants.

- Projects need to have clear ownership, best if initiated locally and designed/managed by the people who know the local conditions well and support the project vision.
- Integrated Environmental Management is not possible if land ownership and legal constraints on actions are unclear.
- The reporting system must allow both the decision-making process and the dissemination of results (awareness raising) among targeted population. The messages must be simple and clear.

**ANNEX 1**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

*Ref: IC 2012-25*

**for professional consulting services for FINAL EVALUATION of UNDP/GEF project  
“Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management  
of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)”**

**Duration:** November 2012 – January 2013

**Terms of Payment:** Lump sum payable in 1 installment, upon satisfactory completion and approval by UNDP of all deliverables, including the Final Evaluation Report.

**Location:** Eastern Slovakia region, Bratislava and other locations in Slovakia as required

**1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project “**Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)**” (PIMS #.2261)

The Project Document was signed between the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic and UNDP/GEF Regional Center for Europe and CIS on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007. The project will end in December 2012.

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

**PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE**

Project title:	<b>Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water Management of Laborec-Uh Region (Eastern Slovakian Lowlands)</b>			
GEF Project ID:	2261		<i>at endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion (Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	55927 /46803	GEF financing:	0.97	0.97
Country:	Slovakia	IA/EA own:	0	0
Region:	Europe and CIS	Government:	3.27	3.45
Focal Area:	Integrated Ecosystem Management	Other:	0.073	0.35
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	12. Ecosystem management	Total co-financing:	3.35	3.70
Executing Agency:	UNDP	Total Project Cost:	4.32	4.67
Other Partners involved:	n/a	ProDoc Signature (date project began):	2 May 2007	
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 31 December 2012	Actual: 31 December 2012

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### Objective and Scope

#### Project objective

The project was designed to contribute to mainstreaming integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors of the new EU members and accession states within the context of the EU Rural Development Programme 2007–2013 and Danube River Protection Convention.

By the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership (originally the LEADER Local Action Group was planned) shall be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of (semi-) natural floodplain habitats that support a representative range of species.

The project shall generate the following four **main outcomes**:

1. Stakeholders will adopt a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices;
2. Stakeholder capacity, policies, and motivation to implement Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) will be strengthened and operational;
3. Stakeholders will pilot ecosystem-oriented biodiversity conservation practices;
4. Replication of best practices and lessons learned from the experience of implementation of IEM in the pilot area in other regions of the Eastern Lowlands, as well as other new EU members and accession states in the Danube River basin.

A fifth outcome will be the successful support, monitoring and evaluation of project implementation itself.

Associated with these outcomes there is a number of Outputs (please see [Attachment A](#) for the Revised Logical Framework of the project).

#### Project area

The project is undertaken in a lowland area of 29,539 ha located within the Latorica River Basin in the Eastern Slovakian Lowlands, lies wholly inside the Danube River catchment. The Uh and the Laborec Rivers (to the West and South respectively) border the project area itself ([Attachment B, Map 1](#)). To the North and up-hill, the project area is bordered by the Zemplinska Sirava Water Reservoir and on the East by a large drainage canal decanting into the Uh River. The project area is more or less bisected by the Čierna Voda River, a tributary of the Laborec (entering close to the confluence with the Uh), whose catchment is largely within the project area.

#### Key stakeholders

**Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic** is the National Executing Agency. MoE appointed a National Project Director (NPD) who assumed the overall responsibility for the project, i.e. accountability of the use of funds and meeting the overall objectives of the project. In addition, he will facilitate interaction among relevant governmental organizations, public organizations, research institutions and private organizations.

**The Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SWMA)** is the National Implementing Agency.

The **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** includes representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Slovak Water Management Enterprise Agricultural Payment Agency, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, Hydromelioration Company, State Nature Conservancy, Office of Košice Self-Governing Region, land register, Agroekoforum as NGO representative, association of municipalities ZMOS, representative of the farmers, representative of municipalities within the project area, the Agricultural Research Institute Michalovce and the project manager.

#### Project partners

**DAPHNE**, an NGO, which role is to undertake species and habitat inventories as a base for preparation of restoration plans and monitoring of changes. In addition, DAPHNE will be responsible for preparation of restoration plans based on current habitat structure and DEM (Digital Elevation Model) in order to elaborate predictive models of habitats in restoration areas and for biodiversity monitoring of restoration areas.

**SOSNA**, an NGO, which is responsible for mobilisation of local people in the formulation of a Local Action Group and preparation of the region for the LEADER approach.

**The Slovak Technical University**, Department of Land and Water Resource Management, which is responsible for elaboration of studies on hydrology, hydrogeology and hydrometeorology that are necessary for planning the restoration work.

**Society for Bird Protection in Slovakia – SOVS** (as partner of BirdLife International in Slovakia), an NGO managing a EU-LIFE project “Conservation of SPA Senné and Medzibrodzie in Slovakia” in the project area. The projects are complementary to each other, in that the LIFE project provides funding for restoration activities and the GEF project will fund preparatory works. In addition, SOVS will be a crucial partner in negotiations with local stakeholders when preparing restoration activities.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects  
<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf> .

**The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.**

#### Evaluation approach and method

An overall approach and method<sup>12</sup> for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The service provider is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR ([Attachment D](#)). The service provider is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The service provider is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with

<sup>12</sup> For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163



government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluation team is expected to conduct a field mission to Laborec-Uh region in Eastern Slovakia. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: UNDP Regional Centre Bratislava, Ministry of Environment of the SR, National Project Director; Steering Committee members; Project Team / Project Partners, key stakeholders in the project area.

The service provider will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Attachment C](#) of this Terms of Reference.

### **Evaluation Criteria & Ratings**

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Attachment A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Attachment E](#).

<b>Evaluation Ratings:</b>			
<b>1. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<i>rating</i>	<b>2. IA&amp; EA Execution</b>	<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
<b>3. Assessment of Outcomes</b>	<i>rating</i>	<b>4. Sustainability</b>	<i>rating</i>
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

### **Project finance / co-finance**

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The service provider will receive assistance from the UNDP BRC and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
In-kind support								

Other								
Totals								

**Mainstreaming**

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

**Impact**

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.<sup>13</sup>

**Conclusions, recommendations & lessons**

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations and lessons**.

**Implementation arrangements**

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP BRC. The UNDP BRC will contract the organization providing the evaluation. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

*Although the consultants of the evaluation team should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned, all matters relevant to its assignment, they are not authorized to make any commitment or statement on behalf of UNDP or GEF or the project management.*

**Evaluation timeframe**

The total duration of the evaluation will be minimum 13 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
<b>Preparation</b>	recommended: 2-4 days	end of November 2012
<b>Evaluation Mission</b>	minimum 5 days	mid December 2012
<b>Draft Evaluation Report</b>	recommended: 5-10 days	9 January 2013
<b>Final Report</b>	recommended: 1-2 days	24 January 2013

<sup>13</sup> A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

**Evaluation deliverables**

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
<b>Inception Report</b>	Evaluation team provides clarifications on timing and method, presents the agreed mission plan	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP BRC
<b>Stakeholder Discussion</b>	Initial Findings based on desk review	5 December 2012	Project Final Conference in Kosice
<b>Mission debriefing</b>	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP BRC
<b>Draft Final Report</b>	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to UNDP BRC, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs to submit comments and suggestions within 5 working days after receiving the draft
<b>Final Report*</b>	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to UNDP BRC for uploading to UNDP ERC.

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

The key product expected from this final evaluation is a comprehensive analytical **Final Evaluation Report** in English that should, at least, follow minimum GEF requirements as indicated in [Attachment G](#).

The Final Evaluation Report will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions. The report will have to provide to UNDP complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings.

The methodology used by the evaluation team should be presented in the Report in detail. It shall include information on:

- Documentation reviewed
- Interviews
- Field visits;
- Questionnaires;
- Participatory techniques and other approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

Section of the evaluation report on lessons learnt and recommendation for replication and transfer of the experience shall be related mainly to:

- post-project sustainability of the efforts both in terms of governance and in terms of environmental benefits;
- capacity building ;
- achievements and challenges.

The Report will include a table with evaluation criteria ratings and table of planned vs. actual project financial disbursements, and planned co-financing vs. actual co-financing in this project.

The report together with the annexes shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word format.

The report shall be submitted and all further communication with UNDP regarding the implementation of this assignment should be addressed to:

Ms. Sylvie Hanzlova  
UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre  
Grosslingova 35, 811 09 Bratislava  
e-mail: [sylvie.hanzlova@undp.org](mailto:sylvie.hanzlova@undp.org)

### **Evaluator Ethics**

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

### **Payment modalities and specifications**

The service provider will be responsible for all personal administrative and travel expenses associated with undertaking this assignment including office accommodation, printing, stationary, telephone and electronic communications, and report copies incurred in this assignment. For this reason, the contract is prepared as a lump sum contract.

The remuneration of work performed will be conducted as follows: lump sum payable in 1 installment, upon satisfactory completion and approval by UNDP of all deliverables, including the Final Evaluation Report.

#### **For the Contractor:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Dagmar Gombitova  
Title: Statutory Representative

#### **For the UNDP:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Andrey Pogrebnyak  
Title: Operations Specialist

## ATTACHMENT A: PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - REVISED

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators
<b>Goal:</b>	To mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors of new EU members and accession states within the context of the EU Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 and Danube River Protection Convention

Project Purpose	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Objective:</b> By the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership will be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of (semi-) natural floodplain habitats that provide water quality	Reduction of nutrient and pollutant loads in soils and watercourses.	> 50 mg/l of nitrates in the surface water 0 % of soil managed by good agricultural practice according to Nitrate Directive	< 50 mg/l of nitrates in the surface water 25% of soil managed by good agricultural practice according to Nitrate Directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hydro-meteorological Institute (water quality reports)</li> <li>➤ State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic reports and publications – Administration of PLALatorica (habitats and protected areas)</li> <li>➤ Michalovce Museum (fauna / flora surveys)</li> <li>➤ SOS (bird surveys)</li> <li>➤ SOP SR</li> <li>➤ Organic farming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National, regional and local authorities maintain good liaison and coordination for implementation of new water and land use policies</li> <li>➤ Funding from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development becomes available from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 as planned</li> <li>➤ Farmers are willing to enter organic</li> </ul>
	Semi-natural floodplain habitats restored and improved	1,300 ha of (semi-) natural floodplain habitat	2,500 ha of (semi-) natural floodplain habitat		
	Area of nature protection areas increased	1,490 ha designated for protection	2,000 ha designated for protection		
	Response of key species to floodplain inundation and river management *	Present levels	Maintained or increased		

Project Purpose	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
improvements and support a representative range of species	No. of enterprises in tourism, handicraft production or other ESE** activities increased	1	8	certification bodies ➤ Local municipalities public hearing minutes (ESEs) ➤ State Water Management Enterprise ➤ Ministry of Agriculture	certification schemes
	No. of inhabitants added to the water treatment system	18 %	27 %		
	Aggregate market value of organic agricultural produce in project area	Nil	3% of overall value of farm production by end of project		

\* The key species (meaning biological indicators of water and habitat quality) and targets as were defined during the inception phase and could also include fish and amphibians, but those listed below have been suggested as they are threatened, representative of high value floodplain habitats, easily monitored, and have charisma for increasing public awareness. Moreover, they are all sensitive to wetland re-inundation, pollution loads and/or trophic quality of inland waters:

- Otter - *Lutra lutra* - (present status: infrequent visitor; target: at least two resident pairs)
- Spoonbill - *Platalea leucorodia* - (present status: 16 breeding pairs; target: at least 20 breeding pairs)
- Great Bittern - *Botaurus stellaris* - (present status: 5 breeding pairs; target: at least 10 breeding pairs)
- Checkered lily - *Fritilaria meleagris* - (present status: growing in four localities; target: population increase in localities at least by 25 %)

\*\* ESE = environmentally sustainable enterprise.

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Stakeholders adopt a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices	Čierna Voda river sub-basin management plan (Sub-BMP), prepared in accordance with EU Water Framework Directive, and adopted by stakeholders**	Basic parameters included in Bodrog River Sub-BMP	Detailed plan prepared for Čierna Voda sub-basin by end of 2009	➤ Adoption of the plan by relevant government entities including State Water Management Authority, Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, Local municipalities	➤ Stakeholder participation (especially farmers) engaged in order to achieve acceptance of the plan
	Ecological status or ecological potential of surface water in Čierna Voda sub-basin improved****	EU-WFD Class 3	EU-WFD Class 2 or better by 2015		

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Stakeholder capacity, policies, and motivation to implement Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) are strengthened and operational	LEADER partnership (Local Action Group – LAG) established	No LAG	LAG formed by – end of 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ MoA Rural Development Department and Department of Structural Policy reports</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities and other partners</li> <li>➤ Public involvement records</li> <li>➤ Leader partnership reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local stakeholders from municipalities, businesses and civil organisations willing to set up a Leader partnership</li> <li>➤ Support provided by Ministry of Agriculture (Rural Development Department)</li> <li>➤ Local entrepreneurs available to set up new environmentally friendly businesses</li> </ul>
	Local Integrated Development Strategy, including integrated ecosystem approach, in place	No LDS	LDS prepared by mid of 2009		
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Ecosystem-oriented biodiversity conservation practices piloted by major stakeholders	No. of pilot projects set up and / or implemented to restore (semi-) natural floodplain habitats and / or strengthen populations of representative species	0	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ State Water Management authority annual reports</li> <li>➤ State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic – Administration of PLA Latorica annual reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Land consolidation is undertaken, with priority given to designated protected areas</li> <li>➤ Farmers and local</li> </ul>

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Environmentally sustainable enterprises accepted as a model for new business practices	0 ESEs with at least 3 employees registered	8 ESEs with at least 3 employees registered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Final Report</li> <li>➤ Implementation reports from pilot projects</li> <li>➤ MoA Rural Development Department annual reports</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities public hearing minutes</li> <li>➤ LEADER partnership reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water company are willing to undertake pilot projects</li> <li>➤ Funding from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development becomes available from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 as planned</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Replication of best practices and lessons learned from the experience of implementation of IEM in other regions of the Eastern Lowlands, as well as other new EU members and accession states	Cooperation with similar projects in Danube River Basin	No linkages	Mechanism established for regular exchange of information and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local information centres visits and web sites visits</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities public awareness meetings minutes</li> <li>➤ Partners in other parts of Eastern Slovakia reporting on replication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ RDP and Natura 2000 under full-scale implementation</li> <li>➤ Project provides resources for public awareness consultant</li> <li>➤ State authorities support spreading information</li> </ul>
	Public awareness of integrated ecosystem management and floodplain restoration raised in project area	No awareness activities undertaken	No. of visitors of the information centre from other localities in Slovakia		

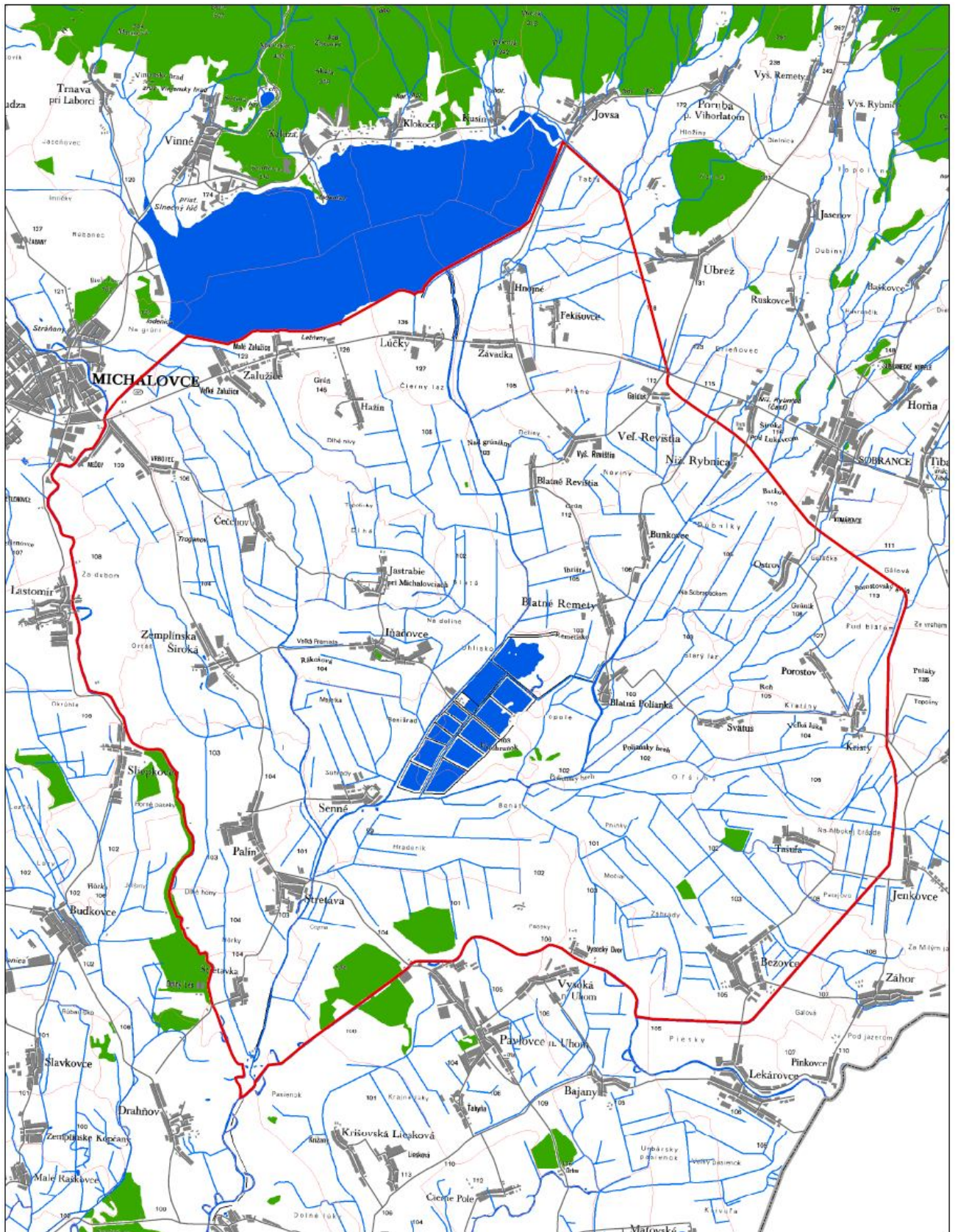


Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Land users elsewhere in Eastern Lowlands willing to adopt sustainable ways of IEM	No replication site identified	Talks started in at least one other site on replication of the floodplain management model by year 4 of the project	strategies implementation ➤ Best practices and lessons learned documented through IW:LEARN, BIO:LEARN, WATER-WIKI and other mechanisms in the region	to other regions through the network of regional advisory centres in Slovakia, providing benefit to Natura 2000 network and/or implementation of RDP ➤ Information centre gains enough resources through Leader programme to be self-sustainable after completion of the project

\*\*\* *The indicator will represent the increased stakeholder awareness and will document better stakeholder involvement as the Sub-BMP will be developed in cooperation with all parties concerned.*

\*\*\*\* *The indicator will correspond to improved measurable chemical, physical and biological parameters of the Čierna Voda sub-basin.*

## ATTACHMENT B: MAP 1 – PROJECT AREA



## ATTACHMENT C: LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE EVALUATORS

Document	Description
Project document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Document</li> </ul>
Project reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inception Report</li> <li>• Quarterly Progress Reports</li> <li>• Annual Project Report to GEF</li> <li>• GEF focal area tracking tools</li> <li>• Mid-term Evaluation Report</li> </ul>
Technical documents produced by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Local Development Strategy</li> <li>• Integrated River Basin Management Plan for Čierna voda</li> <li>• Management Plan of the NPA Rybníky Senné</li> <li>• Methodology for revitalisation of natural floodplain habitats – for meadows and for forests</li> <li>• Identification of sites for low-cost measures improving the hydrological regime in the floodplain</li> <li>• Study on alternative waste water treatment opportunities in the Čierna voda River Basin</li> <li>• Business plans for environmental businesses</li> </ul>
Other relevant materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC meeting minutes</li> <li>• Project budget revisions</li> <li>• Financial Audit Reports 2008-2009, 2012</li> <li>• National strategic and legal documents</li> </ul>

## ATTACHMENT D: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Project relevant to UNCBD, RAMSAR convention, ICPDR and GEF objectives?</li> <li>• Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?</li> <li>• Is the Project relevant to Slovakia’s environmental objectives?</li> <li>• Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?</li> <li>• Is the Project internally coherent in its design?</li> <li>• How is the Project complementary to activities of other stakeholders and donors active in the region?</li> <li>• How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the outputs and activities of the project consistent with the intended project objective and goal?</li> <li>• To what extent have implemented outputs produced or contributed to attaining the expected outcomes?</li> <li>• How was risk and risk mitigation being managed?</li> <li>• What lessons have been learnt for the Project to achieve its outcomes?</li> <li>• What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the Project in order to improve the achievement of the Project’ expected results?</li> <li>• How could the Project be more effective in achieving its results?</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?</li> <li>• Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?</li> <li>• Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?</li> <li>• Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)</li> <li>• Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned?</li> <li>• Were the findings, lessons learned and recommendations shared among Project stakeholders, UNDP and GEF Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement?</li> <li>• Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?</li> <li>• Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Can be considered sustainable?</li> <li>• Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?</li> <li>• Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?</li> <li>• Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support?</li> <li>• Are laws, policies and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and</li> </ul>			

<p>reforms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?</li> <li>• Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?</li> <li>• What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the project achieve its long-term goal to mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors?</li> <li>• What is the level of sensitization and awareness about the integrated ecosystem management approach.</li> <li>• What is the impact of the demonstrated approach in private, public and/or at individual levels?</li> <li>• Were cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation?</li> <li>• How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?</li> </ul>			

## ATTACHMENT E: RATING SCALES

<b><i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&amp;E, I&amp;E Execution</i></b>	<b><i>Sustainability ratings:</i></b>	<b><i>Relevance ratings</i></b>
<p>6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings</p> <p>5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings</p> <p>4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p>3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings</p> <p>2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems</p> <p>1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems</p>	<p>4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks</p> <p>2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks</p> <p>1. Unlikely (U): severe risks</p>	<p>2. Relevant (R)</p> <p>1.. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p><b><i>Impact Ratings:</i></b></p> <p>3. Significant (S)</p> <p>2. Minimal (M)</p> <p>1. Negligible (N)</p>
<b><i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i></b>		
Not Applicable (N/A)		
Unable to Assess (U/A)		

## ATTACHMENT F: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

### Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>14</sup>

#### Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>14</sup>[www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct)



## ATTACHMENT G: EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE<sup>15</sup>

- i. Opening page:
  - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
  - UNDP and GEF project ID#s.
  - Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
  - Region and countries included in the project
  - GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program
  - Implementing Partner and other project partners
  - Evaluation team members
  - Acknowledgements
- ii. Executive Summary
  - Project Summary Table
  - Project Description (brief)
  - Evaluation Rating Table
  - Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations  
(See: UNDP Editorial Manual<sup>16</sup>)
  1. Introduction
    - Purpose of the evaluation
    - Scope & Methodology
    - Structure of the evaluation report
  2. Project description and development context
    - Project start and duration
    - Problems that the project sought to address
    - Immediate and development objectives of the project
    - Baseline Indicators established
    - Main stakeholders
    - Expected Results
  3. Findings  
(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (\*) must be rated<sup>17</sup>)
    - 3.1 Project Design / Formulation
      - Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
      - Assumptions and Risks
      - Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
      - Planned stakeholder participation
      - Replication approach
      - UNDP comparative advantage
      - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
      - Management arrangements
    - 3.2 Project Implementation
      - Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
      - Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the

<sup>15</sup>The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

<sup>16</sup> UNDP Style Manual, Office of Communications, Partnerships Bureau, updated November 2008

<sup>17</sup> Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory, see section 3.5, page 37 for ratings explanations.

- country/region)
  - Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management
  - Project Finance:
  - Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (\*)
  - UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (\*) coordination, and operational issues
- 3.3 Project Results
- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (\*)
  - Relevance(\*)
  - Effectiveness & Efficiency (\*)
  - Country ownership
  - Mainstreaming
  - Sustainability (\*)
  - Impact
4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons
- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
  - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
  - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
  - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
5. Annexes
- ToR
  - Itinerary
  - List of persons interviewed
  - Summary of field visits
  - List of documents reviewed
  - Evaluation Question Matrix
  - Questionnaire used and summary of results
  - Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

## ATTACHMENT H: EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

*(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)*

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNEX 2

## ITINERARY – FIELD VISIT

Person interviewed	Institution	Time	Date
Štefan Szabó	SOSNA, project partner	13.00	10.12.2012
Silvia Szabóová	SOSNA, project partner	13.00	10.12.2012
Pavína Urdová	SOSNA, project partner	13.00	10.12.2012
Juraj Ondřík	Slovak Water Management Enterprise Michalovce	08.00	11.12.2012
Marek Kotora	District Environment Office	09.00	11.12.2012
Nadežda Jurková	Project Manager, civil association Among the Rivers	10.00	11.12.2012
Samuel Pačenovský	SOS/BirdLife, project partner	11.00	11.12.2012
Ján Uhrín	SOS/BirdLife, project partner	11.00	11.12.2012
Gabriel Ivanko	mayor of Iňačovce	13.00	11.12.2012
Miroslav Onduško	mayor of Jastrabie pri Michalovciach	14.00	11.12.2012
Stanislav Mráz	mayor of Čečehov	15.00	11.12.2012
Field visit		08.30	12.12.2012
Jozef Knežo	private farmer, Jastrabie pri Michalovciach	08.30	13.12.2012
Martin Vaľo	DONA s.r.o. Veľké Revištia	09.30	13.12.2012
Marek Keher	mayor of Stretava	10.30	13.12.2012
Václav Ličko	mayor of Bunkovce	13.30	13.12.2012
Oliver Kovács	Košice self-governing region	08.00	14.12.2012
Imrich Fülöp	Košice self-governing region	09.00	14.12.2012
Ján Tkáč	Slovak Water Management Enterprise Košice	10.00	14.12.2012
Stanislav Dobrotka	Slovak Water Management Enterprise Košice	10.00	14.12.2012
Milan Murín	Regional Environmental Office Košice	16.00	14.12.2012

## ANNEX 3

### LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Michal Vacula, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, SC member, 19.11.2012  
Rozália Szallayová, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, SC member, 19.11.2012  
Zuzana Kontrová, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, SC member, 19.11.2012  
Stanislav Goga, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, SC member, 19.11.2012  
Boris Minárik, National project Director, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 26.11.2012  
Eleonóra Bartková, Global Water Partnership, former Project Manager, 3.12.2012  
Jana Ďurkošová, Ministry of Environment, SC member, 3.12.2012  
Rastislav Rybanič, Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Landscape Dev., 3.12.2012  
Dobromil Galvánek, DAPHNE, project partner, 5.12.2012  
Peter Jány, Ministry of Environment, GEF Focal Point, SC member, 5.12.2012  
Andrea Šimková, State Nature Conservancy, project partner, 5.12.2012  
Sylvie Hanzlová, UNDP BRC, 6.12.2012  
Klára Tóthová, UNDP BRC, 6.12.2012  
Andrea Čimborová, UNDP BRC, 6.12.2012  
Štefan Szabó, SOSNA, project partner, 10.12.2012  
Silvia Szabóová, SOSNA, project partner, 10.12.2012  
Pavína Urdová, SOSNA, project partner, 10.12.2012  
Peter Sabo, project manager, 11.12.2012  
Juraj Ondřík, Slovak Water Management Enterprise Michalovce, Implementing Agency, 11.12.2012  
Marek Kotora, District Environment Office, Project Board member, 11.12.2012  
Nadežda Jurková, Project Manager, Civil Association Medzi riekami, 11.12.2012  
Samuel Pačenovský, SOS BirdLife, project partner, 11.12.2012  
Ján Uhrín, SOS BirdLife, project partner, 11.12.2012  
Gabriel Ivanko, mayor of Iňačovce, member of c.a., 11.12.2012  
Miroslav Onduško, mayor of Jastrabie pri Michalovciach, member of c.a., 11.12.2012  
Stanislav Mráz, mayor of Čečehov, member of c.a., 11.12.2012  
Jozef Knežo, private farmer, Jastrabie pri Michalovciach, 13.12.2012  
Martin Vaľo, DONA s.r.o. Veľké Revištia, 13.12.2012  
Marek Keher, mayor of Stretava, 13.12.2012  
Václav Ličko, mayor of Bunkovce, 13.12.2012  
Oliver Kovács, Košice self-governing region, 14.12.2012  
Imrich Fülöp, Košice self-governing region, 14.12.2012  
Ján Tkáč, Slovak Water Management Enterprise Košice, 14.12.2012  
Stanislav Dobrotka, Slovak Water Management Enterprise Košice, 14.12.2012  
Milan Murín, Regional Environmental Office, 14.12.2012  
Rudolf Trebatický, Department of Environmental Activities, Ministry of Agriculture, 19.12.2012  
\*Ján Šeffér, DAPHNE, project partner, 21.12.2012  
\*Ján Kollár, Agriculture Paying Agency, 20.12.2012

\* email correspondence

## ANNEX 4

### SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS

The field mission was conducted from 10 to 13 December 2012. The evaluation team was accompanied by the Project manager. At the time of field visit the countryside was covered with snow. The team visited all important sites where technical measures were implemented.

The basic principle of ecosystem-based water resources management is established in RBMP Čierna Voda and Bodrog River. For this purpose the project carried out following technical measures:

- water lock/gate restoration on the Žarnovica channel important for water drainage of pastures and grassland biotopes,
- sifting and reinforcing of dyke K23,
- appropriate installation of multi-pass outlet under the road for natural water off take at the Blatá, including reparation and reinforcement of the road,
- filling terrain depressions and old channels,
- unilateral channel dyke sifting close to the Ostrovík meadow in length of about 600 m and about 20 - 30 cm wide, minor construction adjustments on water objects (outlet reinforcement and fixing dam facility, raising of concrete water entrance, fixing bridging and others),
- construction of handling facility on Trnava channel and water supply to adjacent wetlands, access road reinforcement and rising.

These measures will have positive impact on the area of over 1500 hectares, and at the same time will contribute to the main RBMP goal to achieve good water status. Technical measures have been carried out on a contractual basis, involving SWME and SOS/BirdLife. Construction and technical arrangements were performed well and are fully functional. Flooded meadows and pastures were at the time of field visit covered with snow and ice, so their ecological benefits could not be evaluated, but this will become apparent already next spring.

#### **Change of arable land to permanent grassland vegetation and change of use (34 hectares).**

According to the original documentation prepared for the project, this activity was one of the dominant ecosystem restoration measures and parts of the integrated ecosystem river basin management plan. Negotiations with concerned agricultural land owners or users have failed and dominant farmers have refused to change arable land for grasslands/wetlands and pastures. As explained, one of the reasons is the potential loss of agricultural subsidies for crops. The improved water regime and conditions for protected birds were of no interest. Another reason was change of the vegetation character and no possibility of intensive utilization – pasture or mowing of hay. The offered extensive approach to new grassland vegetation use was rejected and possible only if the appropriate financial compensation is provided.

The transformation thus took place only at the area of about 34 hectares (localities Blatá and Senné south). The change was carried out as surface treatment. The mown grassland vegetation from meadows and pastures (grasslands) with appropriate vegetation species composition (grass species and associated plants) was covered with mulch and spread on the field. This process should be repeated several times during at least 3 years; the methodology for grassing of arable land was elaborated in May 2011. During the field visit it was not possible to evaluate vegetation effect but surface treatment became obvious as the land was straightened out and covered with mulch. Its effect should be fully apparent after 3 - 5 years. Unfortunately, the above measures could be implemented only at small

territory. The owners and farmers were not willing to provide more areas for farmland and the entire country ecological restoration.

### **Provision of water supply – grassland vegetation swamping.**

The main criterion for selection of land was the agreement of the land owner or farmer. Also here the project encountered the disagreement of farmers, who used existing pastures for grazing and grass mowing for winter cattle feeding. The reason was the fear of losing the economic revenue as well as concern of vegetation character change affected by increased water supply (by controlled swamping and flooding). They also disagreed to increase the birds' food supply as it is not their concern and it causes them problems and profit loss. Therefore this measure was introduced only on land owned by SOS/BirdLife. It is an area of about 100 hectares in Blatá site in the cadastre of Senné and Iňačovce villages. For this purpose also water handling facilities were modified. These measures, in addition to direct water supply in meadows, would have a positive impact and effect on the area of more than 1500 hectares. Discussions with agricultural subjects confirmed their unwillingness to cooperate or to enable required management if it brings an economic loss or loss of the current quality of the used pastures and grasslands. In case of any damages they will claim compensations.

### **Non-forest vegetation restoration**

The project carried out afforestation of selected areas. No woodland creation (afforestation) was initially foreseen but based on the proposals made by mayors associated in c.a. it was agreed with an aim to enrich municipality surroundings because of the absence of (arborescent) country vegetation. The **Methodology for forests planting on abandoned and degraded arable land in the lowland conditions** (P. Polák, P. Sabo, 2012) was prepared. Planting was carried out by selected professionals and the basic condition was to use indigenous trees species seedlings and to choose suitable land owned by the municipality. Mayors have chosen following areas:

- Jastrabie pri Michalovciach – the planting on degraded grasslands in an area of 3,8 hectares
- Čečehov – line/lineage vegetation setting at the rural road on the area of approximately 0,5 hectares,
- Iňačovce – area on the village outskirts of about 0,7 hectares as part of its infrastructure,
- Bajany – abandoned area of former agricultural cooperative on 4,9 hectares,
- Bunkovce – area in touch with municipality in an area of 0,5 hectare.

The total area of forest vegetation planting (trees and shrubs) is about 10,4 hectares and in total about 23 470 wood pieces were planted. The activity was flat or liner saplings planting on previously treated land (surface soil treatment). Following tree species were planted: dominantly oak, ash, maple, linden, additional kinds as elm, poplar, hornbeam and original species of pears and cherries. This should have positive ecological, anti-erosion and climatic effect, and it will also set up core areas of natural gene bank of original tress species with natural expansion possibility. Vegetation will also serve as bird nesting opportunities and small animal hideouts. The young forest vegetation will require some safety measures against animal nibbling.

## ANNEX 5

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Project Document
- Inception Report
- Quarterly Progress Reports (4Q 2007 – 3Q 2012)
- Annual Project Report to GEF / Project Implementation Report 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
- Mid-term Evaluation Report
- Integrated Local Development Strategy
- River Basin Management Plan for Čierna voda
- Management Plan of the NPA Rybníky Senné
- Methodology for revitalisation of natural floodplain habitats – for meadows and for forests
- Identification of sites for low-cost measures improving the hydrological regime in the floodplain
- Study on alternative waste water treatment opportunities in the Čierna Voda River Basin
- Business plans for environmental businesses
- SC meeting minutes
- Project budget revisions
- Financial Audit Reports 2008-2009
- Design and Implementation of Root WasteWater treatment Plants
- Ecological restoration measures within the framework of Laborec-Uh project
- Establishment and development of inter-sectoral partnerships
- Biodiversity Conservation and Management in Barycz Valley, Terminal Evaluation, 2009
- Identification of the flood retention potential of the riverine landscape in Bodrog River Basin
- Hydraulic analysis of water supply for water regime adjustment in the Senné site
- Verification of water retention options in the Senianske ponds site
- Hydrological-hydraulic supporting documents for managing water management system of Vyšná Rybnica – Čierna Voda
- Identification of the position and altitude of detailed points to determine a digital relief model
- Analysis of possible drainage and wastewater treatment in the Čierna voda river basin
- Summary of restoration measures under the Laborec-Uh project
- Report on the vegetation monitoring of restoration interventions on sites Ostrovík, Blatá and Senné-South in the years 2010-12
- Management and restoration measures proposal for the project territory Laborec-Uh
- Draft options for restoration measures implemented by local communities in the Laborec-Uh project territory
- Report on the vegetative monitoring of restoration interventions in Ostrovík and Blatá locations in the year 2010, 2011
- Proposal of arable land grassing, used by self employed farmers around Senné and in the Blatá site
- [www.life-senne.sk](http://www.life-senne.sk)
- <http://www.icpdr.org/main/activities-projects/bodrog-demonstration-project-component-2-undpgef-tisza-msp-making-space-water>



## ANNEX 6

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

## LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

Project Strategy		Objectively verifiable indicators
<b>Goal:</b>	To mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors of new EU members and accession states within the context of the EU Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 and Danube River Protection Convention	

Project Purpose	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
By the end of the project, an innovative stakeholder partnership will be in place in the project area that can continue to implement a self-sustaining water and land management programme resulting in environmentally sound agricultural practices, alternative non-farm livelihoods, and further expanding the extent of	Reduction of nutrient and pollutant loads in soils and watercourses, using organic production as a proxy measure	>50 mg/l of nitrates in the surface water 0% of soil managed by good agricultural practice according to Nitrate Directive	<50 mg/l of nitrates in the surface water 25% of soil managed by good agricultural practice according to Nitrate Directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hydro-meteorological Institute (water quality reports)</li> <li>➤ State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic reports and publications – Administration of PLA Latorica (habitats and protected areas)</li> <li>➤ Michalovce Museum (fauna / flora surveys)</li> <li>➤ SOVS (bird surveys)</li> <li>➤ Organic farming certification bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National, regional and local authorities maintain good liaison and coordination for implementation of new water and land use policies</li> <li>➤ Funding from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development becomes available from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 as planned</li> <li>➤ Farmers are willing to enter organic certification</li> </ul>
	Semi-natural floodplain habitats restored and improved	1,300 ha of (semi-) natural floodplain habitat	2,500 ha of (semi-) natural floodplain habitat		

Project Purpose	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
(semi-) natural floodplain habitats that provide water quality improvements and support a representative range of species	Area of nature protection areas increased	1,490 ha designated for protection	2,000 ha designated for protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local municipalities public hearing minutes (ESEs)</li> <li>➤ State Water Management Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture</li> </ul>	schemes
	Response of key species to floodplain inundation and river management	Present levels	Maintained or increased		
	No. of enterprises in tourism, handicraft production or other ESE** activities increased	1	8		
	No. of inhabitants added to the water treatment system	18 % (2%*)	27 % (11%*)		
	Aggregate market value of organic agricultural produce in project area	Nil	3% of overall value of farm production by end of project**		

\*latest adjustment approved by SC in 2011, \*\* this should be replaced by: The total annual market value of 10 ESE supported by the project in the last project year.

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Stakeholders adopt a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices	Čierna Voda River sub-basin management plan (Sub-BMP), prepared in accordance with EU Water Framework Directive, and adopted by stakeholders	Basic parameters included in Bodrog River Sub-BMP	Detailed plan prepared for Čierna Voda sub-basin by end of 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adoption of the plan by relevant government entities including State Water Management Authority, Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, Local municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stakeholder participation (especially farmers) engaged in order to achieve acceptance of the plan</li> </ul>
	Ecological status of surface water in Čierna Voda sub-basin improved	EU-WFD Class 3	EU-WFD Class 2 or better by 2008		
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Stakeholder capacity, policies, and motivation to implement Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) are strengthened and operational	LEADER partnership (Local Action Group – LAG) established	No LAG	LAG formed by mid-2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ MoA Rural Development Department and Department of Structural Policy reports</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities and other partners</li> <li>➤ Public involvement records</li> <li>➤ Leader partnership reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local stakeholders from municipalities, businesses and civil organisations willing to set up a Leader partnership</li> <li>➤ Support provided by Ministry of Agriculture (Rural Development Department)</li> <li>➤ Local entrepreneurs available to set up new environmentally friendly businesses</li> </ul>
	Local Integrated Development Strategy, including integrated ecosystem approach, in place	No LDS	LDS prepared by end of 2006		

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Ecosystem- oriented biodiversity conservation practices piloted by major stakeholders	No. of pilot projects set up and / or implemented to restore (semi-) natural floodplain habitats and / or strengthen populations of representative species	0	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ State Water Management authority annual reports</li> <li>➤ State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic – Administration of PLA Latorica annual reports</li> <li>➤ Final Report</li> <li>➤ Implementation reports from pilot projects</li> <li>➤ MoA Rural Development Department annual reports</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities public hearing minutes</li> <li>➤ LEADER partnership reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Land consolidation is undertaken, with priority given to designated protected areas</li> <li>➤ Farmers and local water company are willing to undertake pilot projects</li> <li>➤ Funding from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development becomes available from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 as planned</li> </ul>
	Environmentally sustainable enterprises accepted as a model for new business practices	0 ESEs with at least 3 employees registered	8 ESEs with at least 3 employees registered		
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Replication of best practices and lessons learned from the experience of implementation of IEM in other regions of the Eastern Lowlands, as well as other new EU members	Cooperation with similar projects in Danube River Basin	No linkages	Mechanism established for regular exchange of information and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local information centres visits and web sites visits</li> <li>➤ Local municipalities public awareness meetings minutes</li> <li>➤ Partners in other parts of Eastern Slovakia reporting on replication strategies implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ RDP and Natura 2000 under full-scale implementation</li> <li>➤ Project provides resources for public awareness consultant</li> <li>➤ State authorities support spreading information to other regions through the</li> </ul>

Project Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
and accession states	Public awareness of integrated ecosystem management and floodplain restoration raised in project area	No awareness activities undertaken	Public awareness plan prepared and implemented	➤ Best practices and lessons learned documented through IW:LEARN, BIO:LEARN, WATER-WIKI and other mechanisms in the region	<p>network of regional advisory centres in Slovakia, providing benefit to Natura 2000 network and/or implementation of RDP</p> <p>➤ Information centre gains enough resources through Leader programme to be self-sustainable after completion of the project</p>
	Land users elsewhere in Eastern Lowlands willing to adopt sustainable ways of IEM	No replication site identified	Talks started in at least one other site on replication of the floodplain management model by year 4 of the project		

**ANNEX 7**  
**EVALUATION QUESTION MATRIX**

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?</b>			
Is the Project relevant to UNCBD, RAMSAR convention, ICPDR and GEF objectives?	Compliance/consistence of objectives	Project documents, international strategic documents	Desk review of relevant strategic documents
Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?	Compliance/consistence of objectives	UNDP strategy	Desk review of relevant strategic documents
Is the Project relevant to Slovakia's environmental objectives?	Compliance/consistence of objectives	Project documents, national strategic documents, MoE	Desk review of relevant strategic documents, interviews with MoE
Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?	Beneficiaries satisfaction	Project beneficiaries at the local and national level	Interviews, focus group
Is the Project internally coherent in its design?	Consistency of objectives, outcome, outputs and respective indicators	Logical framework, project documents	Reconstruction of the intervention logic
How is the Project complementary to activities of other stakeholders and donors active in the region?	Complementarity of project objectives and activities (GEF and other donors)	Direct and indirect project stakeholders	Mapping of relevant projects
How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?	Needs of the beneficiaries	Project beneficiaries	Interviews, focus group
<b>Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?</b>			
To what extent are the outputs and activities of the project consistent with the intended project objective and goal?	Consistency of objectives, outcome, outputs and respective indicators	Logical framework, project documents	Reconstruction of the intervention logic
To what extent have implemented outputs produced or contributed to attaining the expected outcomes?	Indicators determined in the LF	Logical framework, project documents, Project stakeholders and beneficiaries	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group, telephone interviews
How was risk and risk mitigation being managed?	Risks identification/probability	Risk Log matrix	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group, telephone interviews
What lessons have been learnt for the Project to achieve its outcomes?	Lessons learnt	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group, telephone interviews
What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the Project in order to improve the	Planned vs achieved results	Project reports, project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews, focus group, panel



<b>Evaluative Criteria Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
achievement of the Project's expected results?			
How could the Project be more effective in achieving its results?	Project indicators	Project reports, project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews, panel
<b>Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?</b>			
Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?	Budget reallocations	Project financial reports	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?	Timely and accurate delivery of financial reports	Financial reports	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?	Timely and accurate delivery of project reports	Project reports	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)	Disbursed financial sources	Financial and project reports	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned?	Financial contributions from partners	Financial reports	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Were the findings, lessons learned and recommendations shared among Project stakeholders, UNDP and GEF Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement?	Adjustments justified by findings, lessons learned	Minutes from SC meetings	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?	Stakeholders gender ratio	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Can be considered sustainable?	Operating partnerships	Project reports, web pages of project and existing partnerships, project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews
Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project?	Local stakeholders involvement	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			
Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?	Measures implemented within the project	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, observation
Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?	Secured financial sources for the partnership activities	Financial reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews

<b>Evaluative Criteria Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support?	Activities undertaken after the project completion	Project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews, focus groups
Are laws, policies and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?	Policy proposals	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?	Turnover of the partnership staff	Project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews, focus groups
Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?	Replicated projects	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results?	Sustainability threats	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
<b>Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?</b>			
Will the project achieve its long-term goal to mainstream integrated ecosystem management principles and practices into the land and water management and agricultural sectors?	Ecological indicators	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, observation, panel
What is the level of sensitization and awareness about the integrated ecosystem management (IEM) approach?	IEM implemented	Project stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observation
What is the impact of the demonstrated approach in private, public and/or at individual levels?	Application of IEM principles	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews, observation
Were cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation?	Flood protection measures	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews
How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?	Recommended measures	Project reports, project stakeholders	Desk review, semi-structured interviews

## ANNEX 8

### QUESTIONNAIRE USED AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. **How long have you been a member of this civil association?**
2. **Please circle the number that best shows how satisfied you are with each aspect of the c.a. that are described below**

<b>Planning and implementation</b>	Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of the vision			3,4		
Planning of objectives			3,3		
Preparation of activities			3,4		
Preparation of the applications/ grants			3,6		
Education activities for public and other subjects			3,9		

<b>Leadership</b>	Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
Competence of staff and leadership				4,2	
Commitment to build and sustain diverse memberships				4,1	
Opportunities for members to take the leadership				4,0	
Balance of powers between staff, leaders and members			3,7		

<b>Involvement</b>	Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
Participation of influential people from key sectors and organisations		2,7			
Collaboration with local communities		2,9			
Help given to local communities to become better able to address and resolve their concerns		2,9			
Effective cooperation of actors during the meetings			3,5		

<b>Communication</b>	Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
Communication between members and staff				4,2	
Communication among members			3,6		
Communication between c.a. and the broader community			3,4		
Extent to which c.a. members are listened to and heard				4,0	
Common issues are sorted quickly				4,1	
Provision of information about sources /grants/				4,6	

<b>Your opinion about the work in c.a.</b>	Disagree			Agree	
My abilities are used effectively			3,9		
My time is well spent on c.a.				4,0	
I do care about the future of c.a.				4,5	
Members stay on tasks			3,5		

<b>Progress and outcomes of c.a.</b>	Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
C.a. efforts to sustain itself				4,1	
Progress in meetings c.a. objectives			3,3		
Success in generating resources for c.a.		2,9			
Fairness with which funds and opportunities are distributed				4,0	
Capacity of members to give support to each other			3,7		

<b>How certain you are that</b>	Very unsure sure			Absolutely sure	
c.a. will improve the situation in the region			3,7		
Region is better off today because of c.a.			3,2		

In total out of 20 c.a. members 13 responses were delivered.

**ANNEX 9**  
**EVALUATION CONSULTANT AGREEMENT**  
**FORM**

### Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

#### Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>1</sup>

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** Daniel Svobeda

**Name of Consultancy Organization:** D&D Consulting s.r.o.

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at Prague on 14 November 2012

Signature: 

<sup>1</sup>[www.unevaluator.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluator.org/unegcodeofconduct)



### Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

**Evaluators:**

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System</b>	
Name of Consultant: Peter Straka	
Name of Consultancy Organization: D&D Consulting s.r.o.	
I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.	
Signed at Bratislava on 14 November 2012	
Signature:	

<sup>1</sup>www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct



## **ANNEX 10**

### **PLANNED AND ACHIEVED OUTPUTS**

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
<b>1. Stakeholders adopt a long-term strategy for ecosystem-based water and agricultural management practices</b>	
1.1 Training workshop and scoping for Čierna Voda River sub-BMP	seminar to introduce the scope, planning processes and current status of the development of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Čierna Voda took place in June 2008
1.2 Preparation of draft Čierna Voda River sub-BMP	4Q 2008 RBMP prepared
1.3 Public Consultation exercise on draft Čierna Voda River sub-BMP	3Q 10 Čierna Voda River Basin Management Plan completed, approved by MoE, presented to local stakeholders, public consultation on annual conference in June 2010.
1.4 Amendment of draft Čierna Voda River sub-BMP and approval by local and national authorities	Link to the Čierna Voda River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) is part of the Bodrog RBMP which is strategic governmental water management document.
1.5 Implementation of recommended measures to achieve good ecological status in the Čierna Voda River	Global Water Partnership Slovakia prepared study “Wastewater treatment opportunities in Čierna Voda River basin” and handbook for designing and operating of root wastewater treatment plants for municipalities and regional water authorities, the most suitable location for Root WWTP was selected. 4Q 2012 Project documentation for demonstrative root wastewater treatment plant in village Senné was delivered.
<b>2. Stakeholder capacity, policies, and incentives to implement Integrated Environmental Management are strengthened and operational</b>	
2.1 Training workshop on EAFRD and scoping of partnership for Leader Local Action Group	The initial analysis for the Strategy for establishment of LAG in the Project area was prepared and based on the results it was concluded that the situation in the region does not allow to establish operational LAG and prepare its strategy. The small activities were organized to start local initiatives and identify potential leaders. Touring exhibition, Pumpkin feast, three Micro-grant schemes supporting 13 small projects to initiate community life and mutual communication took place.
2.2 Establishment of Leader Local Action Group as a legal entity	It was agreed that LAG will not be established. In October 09 civic association Medzi riekami was registered and started its operation. It received funding for the project "County where people like to live" which was submitted under the call for proposals launched by NPOA (04-10/2010).
2.3 Prepare draft Integrated Local Sustainable Development Plan, incorporating ecosystem management aspects	It was agreed to develop the development strategy for the area, rather than Leader strategy and workshops were organized with local municipalities, farmers, entrepreneurs. Based on the priorities arising from the problem analysis four strategic priorities and specific goals were set up for ILSD.
2.4 Public Consultation exercise on draft Local Sustainable Development Plan	The document was approved by 15 municipality councils.
2.5 Submission of Integrated Local Sustainable Development Plan to national managing authority	n.a.
2.6 Review and update of Local Sustainable Development Plan	Rehabilitation and recovery of green public areas, preparation of the projects documentation - ponds.
2.7 Information and training workshops for entrepreneurs in support of the Local Sustainable Development Plan	Meetings organised: 29 participants, farming on 1445 ha of land, 5 participants showed interest in developing the business plan. DAPHNE visited 8 biggest agricultural cooperatives and farm users to provide necessary information on the conditions and types of current agro-environmental subsidy schemes. 7 seminars organised in April 2009, with

	limited participation of farmers, provided information on available EU and national funds. Seminar entitled “ <i>Bringing back the hemp to our land</i> ” provided analysis of demand-supply chain for alternative crops in Slovakia.
<b>3. Stakeholders pilot model ecosystem-oriented biodiversity conservation practices</b>	
3.1 Land consolidation undertaken and management plan prepared for Ramsar site	The Management Plan is being developed for proposed SPA (Senne ponds) as a part of the LIFE project Senne A proposal of Management Plan of Protected Bird Area Senne developed by SOS/Bird Life was commented by DAPHNE experts.
3.2 Selection of at least five pilot floodplain habitat restoration sites based on Čierna Voda River sub-BMP	Slovak Land Fund (SPF) was requested to provide information on ownership of land plots – identification of areas, DAPHNE carried out a terrain mapping aimed to map grass vegetation and other selected biotopes (such as depression at fields, canals) in central part of the area. The GIS database was processed from available climatic, meteorological, hydrological, soil and landscape data (STU). Hydrological model was elaborated and tuned, and simulation of individual elements of hydrological balance in daily steps was developed. Based on that the Proposal of management and restoration measures for the project area Laborec–Uh" has been finished.
3.3 Feasibility studies carried out for floodplain restoration pilot sites	Completed measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase and slope on channel banks around the new water sluice built on channel K23 in Iňačovce</li> <li>- repaired embankment on the meadow Ostrovík</li> <li>- construction of sluice gate underneath the dirt road at Blatá completed</li> <li>- repaired sluice gate on the road at locality "Trnava", to ensure manipulation with the device</li> <li>- restoration of arable land into grasslands – 34 ha</li> <li>- reforestation of several places – 10 ha</li> <li>- permission request for surface water supplies for NNR Senianske fish-ponds from river Okna submitted</li> </ul>
3.4 Proposals for floodplain habitat restoration included in LSDP and submitted under Axis 2 of EAFRD	n.a.
3.5 Land consolidation and consolidation of work in pilot localities and implementation of agro-environmental schemes	n.a.
3.6 Preparation of business plans for at least ten new small ecologically sustainable enterprises	List of potential candidates for preparation of the business plans was developed, plans for 6 subjects were developed
<b>4. Best practices and lessons learned from implementation of Integrated Environmental Management in the pilot area are disseminated</b>	
4.1 Establishment of information and support centres on floodplain restoration and sustainable management	The information centre was established by SOS/BirdLife in Senne. In October 2008 the project team launched its monthly Newsletter from Laborec–Uh project. The newly established c.a. took over the responsibilities related to publishing and distribution of project newsletter. The project experience should be used in the new project funded from the EU Fund for South-east Europe: SEE RIVER "Sustainable integrated management of international river corridors in the countries of South-east Europe."

4.2 Creation and maintenance of project web site	The web site was launched in January 2009.
4.3 Exchange visits to similar sites / projects	Study tour to the National park Hortobagy in Hungary was organized on 24-25.10.2008 a) Study tour to Morava and Záhorie, 30 September - 2 October 2009, 21 participants and following villages were visited: Borský Svätý Jur, Hostětín and Modrá pri Velehrade.
4.4 Project annual seminars and end-of-project conference	Annual Project conferences and end-of-project conference were organised
4.5 Production of final project outcomes and lessons report	4Q 2012 Integrated River Basin Management – Summary of lessons learned from implementation of Laborec-Uh project delivered and presented at the final project conference.

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## ANNEX 11

### COMMENTS TO INDICATORS

Project purpose indicators	Target	Comment
Reduction of nutrient and pollutant loads in soils and watercourses, using organic production as a proxy measure	<50 mg/l of nitrates in the surface water	The value is not measured, monitoring would be rather expensive and could be introduced as impact indicator to be monitored several years after the completion of the intervention.
	25 % of soil managed by good agricultural practice according to Nitrate Directive	Not possible to measure, no criteria set, nobody responsible for collection of such a data.
Semi-natural floodplain habitats restored and improved	2500 ha of (semi-) natural floodplain habitat (baseline 1300 ha)	Not relevant though overall 1371 ha of floodplain habitat reported as restored due to the project, however, the introduced measures endured water logging but not restoration as such. Moreover, no guarantee is provided that the owners or farmers managing the neighbouring plots will agree to apply suggested water regime.
Area of nature protection areas increased	2000 ha designated for protection	Not relevant as no efforts to increase nature protection areas were part of the project activities, ecological status of SPA (Special Protection Area for Bird Protection) was improved due to ecological restoration of 33 ha of arable land changed to wet meadows and set up of water management targeted to increase humidity of ground.
Response of key species to floodplain inundation and river management	maintained or increased	Due to regular flooding management and integrated water manipulation in some plots inside as well as outside of SPA, the key protected bird species ( <i>botaurus stellaris</i> , <i>platalea leucorodia</i> ) could occur within restored land due to increasing of breeding offer and appropriate habitats for birds. Occurrence of otter ( <i>lutra lutra</i> ) is not relevant due to its long migration through channel system for feeding. As regards the land restoration (changing of arable soil to wet meadows and pastures) the process of planting or restitution of key species of <i>fritilaria meleagris</i> could not done especially due to its otology and ecological requirements.
No. of enterprises in tourism, handcraft production or other ESE activities increased	8	Overall 6 business plan for agriculture enterprises were prepared and how far they will materialise is difficult to predict (output indicator).
No. of inhabitants added to the water treatment system	27 %	Not relevant as the project did not deal with the water treatment system construction.
Aggregate market value of organic agricultural produce in project area	3% of overall value of farm production by end of project	The indicator above envisaged the establishment of enterprises therefore it is unlikely to expect that at the same time we can measure their production value, moreover these data will be difficult to collect.

Outcome indicators	Target	Comment
Čierna Voda River sub-basin management plan (Sub-BMP), prepared in accordance with EU Water Framework Directive, and adopted by stakeholders	Detailed plan prepared for Čierna Voda sub-basin by end of 2009	RBMP prepared in 2008 (output indicator). RBMP for Bodrog river was prepared in 2009 and included catchment area of Čierna Voda River. For the preparation of RBMP all technical, technological and expert results prepared within the project were applied (e.g. ground water models, flood management plan for meadows, etc.). The Slovak Water Management Enterprise Košice is responsible for the implementation of the plan however financial sources are not secured.
Ecological status of surface water in Čierna Voda sub-basin improved	EU-WFD Class 2 or better by 2015	Impact indicator, depending on the RBMP implementation.
LEADER partnership (Local Action Group – LAG) established	LAG formed by end of 2008	Civic association was formed and officially registered in October 2009 (output indicator).
Local Integrated Development Strategy, including integrated ecosystem approach, in place	LDS prepared by end of 2009	Strategy was prepared and approved in 2012 (output indicator).
No. of pilot projects set up and / or implemented to restore (semi-) natural floodplain habitats and / or strengthen populations of representative species	5	Overall 9 pilot activities were implemented with the positive impact on 1371 ha (output indicator).
Environmentally sustainable enterprises accepted as a model for new business practices	8 ESEs with at least 3 employees registered	So far no registration of ESE was reported.
Cooperation with similar projects in Danube River Basin	Mechanism established for regular exchange of information and experience	The web page and newsletter served as the tools for exchange of information, cooperation with all projects in the area was ensured (management practice), but needs updating.
Public awareness of integrated ecosystem management and floodplain restoration raised in project area	No. of visitors of the information centre from other localities in Slovakia	The Information Centre was eventually established by the SOS BirdLife from other sources, no figures on visitors have been mentioned in the project reports.
Land users elsewhere in Eastern Lowlands willing to adopt sustainable ways of IEM	Talks started in at least one other site on replication of the floodplain management model by year 4 of the project	Impact indicator, most likely measuring long-term effects in far future, initial talks could hardly prove achievement of this indicator

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## ANNEX 12

### SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS



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**1. Study: Identification of the flood retention potential of the riverine landscape in Bodrog River Basin**, Global Water Partnership Slovakia, December 2011, B. Minárik, J. Alena, V. Kunderát, D. Galvánek, 35 pages).

This study is an analytical Position Paper and was elaborated as the output of the UNDP/GEF/ICPDR project *"Making space for water in the Bodrog River Basin"*. It provides an integrated knowledge of the entire area and information on the hydrological and hydroecological functions of the river basin. The study provides a very valuable description of the current status and management of water and hydromelioration installations built during the previous period of central planning, which has changed completely since 1990. Many facilities were abandoned and their original function turned against the objective for which they were built. This fact, together with the massive depression of agricultural production in the affected area and disinterest for irrigated farmland (high cost) endangered the overall functionality of the device as well as water resources, which is essential for eco-sociologic status of National Nature Reserve and the Ramsar Site Senne ponds and Natura 2000 site (SPA – Protection Bird Area Senne ponds). The study also deals with the environmental aspects of proposed measures on the location of water in the basin, especially in flood situations. It examines the ecological value of the affected sites in the country.

The analytical document is primarily focused on:

- the potential to integrate land use and development of water management in the Bodrog river basin, including the Project territory,
- the proposal to increase the water space in the basin to enhance ecological values,
- a methodology for the analysis of ecosystem functions linked to the water in the area,
- the estimation of the proposed measures implementation to revitalize the Eastern Lowlands and their potential for the Slovak Republic water management,
- draft measures for the Slovak Republic rural development strategy, taking into account the needs of territory and water resources management.

The study contains a disproportionately large space dedicated to the standard flood control measures, mostly dry polder system or to the flood water conservation reservoirs basically all around the river basin of Laborec, Latorica, Ondava, Bodrog flows from Streda nad Bodrogom to Snina and the district of Bardejov. The areas suitable for relief of flood flows was identified e.g. locations outside the designated inundation courses that can be used to accommodate flood waters at the time of extreme hydrological events on the water course (artificial and controlled interruption of a dam and the construction of buildings in the dam body outlets).

Extremely suitable territory for the project experience application with the subsidy of wetland ecosystems of Bodrog river basin is the "Medzibodrožie area". However, main the focus here is on the restoration and revitalization measures of the Tica stream (part of Latorica PLA – Protected Landscape Area).

In addition to this area (which does not affect the project objectives), the study further addresses the following potential replications:

- water regime restoration in the Sobrance water channel area,
- water restoration in the area of the left bank of Trnavka stream,
- wetland restoration in the former inundation Latorica river.

A key outcome in line with the project intentions (identifying problem and proposing solutions) is the part of the eco-evaluation of the selected areas potential. In addition to possible solutions, this part is devoted to the ecological aspects of the proposed solutions, and underlining potential risks and

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conflicts of interest of habitat conservation (e.g. NATURA 2000 sites). Individual areas are assessed in terms of their potential environmental and design solutions.

A special part of the study is the financial support analysis, received by agricultural entities, where the imbalance has been shown, or where their targeted use is often inconsistent with the environmental and flood prevention landscape functions, or the objectives outlined by project, respectively. The biggest problem seems to be mainly the existence of arable land and its use and the financial grant in inundation areas of lowlands. In these areas the agricultural subject often receives comparable payments for arable land and grasslands, while the extra revenue from product sales of arable land are significantly higher than from grasslands. The study deals with the possible ways of addressing these problems connected with not appropriately targeted and directed subsidy incentives to agricultural production and landscape protection. The summary includes the proposals for the replication of the projects' experience in the Bodrog river basin, proposals for the stakeholders' discussion to solve problems in accordance with their interests and requirements, and other alternatives by using information from other pilot cases. The study identifies hydro-ecological problems and suggests partial solutions for the institutions responsible by law (SWME and Hydromeliorations) in the project area.

The above mentioned analytical material should have been consulted with stakeholders and reviewed.

*The study was used in earlier territory analysis with regard to water management and flood risks of Bodrog wide river basin area, including the Čierna Voda river basin. It confirmed relevance of the project territory and presented the input data analysis that is used in subsequent measures, which were formulated in the RBMP.*

The project partner was the Slovak Technical University Bratislava – Department of Hydraulic Engineering (STU). Support of the scientific workplace was very desirable in order to ensure objectivity and modelling projections of hydrological regime that will be reflected in the integrated river basin management of Čierna Voda. According to employees of SWME (Košice, Michalovce) these data are extremely valuable and useful and can be utilized in various water management areas. The STU has elaborated a few technical reports, which were subsequently used for the preparation of integrated river basin management of Čierna Voda and ecological restoration measures in the country and water management facilities.

At the same time a number of supporting professional activities were carried out, collecting data and information on hydrological regime in the territory:

1. Terrain mapping of grasslands and side vegetation, terrain depressions, channel system, wetlands and water bodies,
2. Ichthyologic survey of water courses and channels in the studied territory,
3. GIS database of available climatic, meteorological, hydrological, soil and landscape data was generated,
4. Detailed geodetic survey of the chosen territory,
5. Information for hydrological territory model elaboration has been collected,
6. Evaluation of the surface and groundwater interaction in the channel system,
7. Elaboration of off takes components and hydrological balance elements simulation,
8. Retrospective hydrological balance modelling,
9. Processing of complete geological territory analysis,

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10. Carried out field research of the territory humidity conditions,
  11. Water level analysis and prognosis in the investigated territory channel system,
  12. Analysis and prognosis of the water level impact in the channel system on the groundwater level regime in the investigated territory,
  13. Other exact measures and data, ad hoc.

Based on this information STU elaborated following studies:

**2. Study: Hydraulic analysis of water supply for water regime adjustment in the Senné site.** (STU Bratislava, A. Šoltész, J. Kamenský, L. Čubanová, D. Baroková, June 2009, 45 pages).

It is the study of hydrological and hydro-technical regime, focusing mainly at:

- Understanding of the courses, channels and waste current status from the morphological and hydrological point of view,
- Channel network features verification and analysis of water supply options,
- Elaboration of technical interventions and the system function changing from drainage to subsidial,
- Mathematical model of steady non-uniform flow in the channel system development,
- Verification of the water level and flow regime in the system flow scenarios simulation,
- Functions and objects flow capacity verification in the system (dam outlets at a retaining channel) and the required technical interventions of the manipulation system facilities,
- Elaborating the overall balance of water flow into the given territory tributaries of retaining channel and the level regime in it,
- Drawing up conclusions and recommendations for proposal implementation and system operation.

In addition to that, a mathematical model of the entire water system and the project territory water regime was elaborated, as an artificial regime, taking into account the possibility of certain part and natural features and the entire system regime restoration. The hydraulic analysis of water subsidy option to Senné environs for soil water regime modification shows that it is possible to supply the territory in average year with adequate water amounts under little technical interventions to the existing channel system. System model function is based on the drainage channels function change, as draining of excess territory water to supply water function, and part of natural discharge will be used in Okna, Žiarovnický and Sobranecký creeks and via dam output the water will be lead to country with the lack of water (channel system and grasslands). The entire system should be however completely monitored.

*The study contains numerous graphical and table attachments explained in the textual part, that are useful for river basin management planning.*

**3. Study: Verification of water retention options in the Senianske ponds site** (STU, A. Šoltész, May 2009, 5 pages).

The study was prepared by two STU departments – Department of Hydraulic and Water Resources Management Department, in close cooperation with SWME Košice and Michalovce. The study represents a proposal to carry out a real experiment of water handling, so that the project goals are achieved – an integrated and ecosystem-based model of water handling in the project territory. It represents a particular attempt „in situ“, that would show the best potential of water retention

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opportunities in the given territory, limited from east by the Záchytný kanál (Retention Channel), from south by Uh river and by Čierna Voda River from the west. Necessary technical interventions and synergies disposal of the individual water management structures are described in detail. It denies the concern that in this way addressed water resources management would harm the country by swamping or soil deterioration.

*Unfortunately, the experiment was not carried out due to disagreement of farmers. This model should be tested. It could be carried out either as a trial experiment or directly applied by handling and manipulation of water in the project territory under the RBMP Bodrog river – sub-basin Čierna voda.*

**4. Study: Hydrological-hydraulic supporting documents for managing water management system of Vyšná Rybnica – Čierna Voda** (STU, A. Šoltesz, J. Kamenický, May 2010, 6 pages).

It is a follow up study to the previous material with a specification for sub-basin Čierna Voda. It is an input for water management handling document, that should become part of the RBMP Bodrog river. Analysis was carried out on the basis of background material of water management models and field survey as well as personal consultations with staff responsible for the preservation status and inspection of the site and water management facilities for regulation of the water level in NPR Senianske ponds.

*Documents and calculated model can be applied for the integrated water regime management and water handling to achieve the optimum balance in the hydrological country regime.*

**5. Technical report: Identification of the position and altitude of detailed points to determine a digital relief model** (STU, J. Papčo et al., October 2008, 5 pages).

This is a technical report on the planimetric and altimetric detailed points orientation to determine the digital terrain model in the Senné cadastral area. The measurement was performed using special technology measurement method. The data were used to model water handling solutions in the project territory. The obtained data were provided to SWME Michalovce as well as for the preparation of RBMP Čierna Voda.

*This is a highly specialized geodetic and technical measurement prepared by the Department of Geodesy STU Bratislava. The mentioned measurement was performed by the latest technology for the terrain measurement and the digital elevation model creation.*

**6. Study: Analysis of possible drainage and wastewater treatment in the Čierna voda river basin** (E. Bartková, April 2012, 40 pages).

The analysis of possibilities of drainage and waste water treatment in the Čierna Voda river basin builds on the actions proposed in the Čierna Voda RBMP, prepared by the project and focuses on the analysis of formation, drainage and treatment of waste water. The study suggests the possibility of applying the extensive applications of wastewater treatment in this river basin. At the same time it aims to provide information to municipalities and other local entities engaged in the project. It is focused on financial support for the provision of project documentation for waste water treatment in a low-cost way through the biological/root system waste water treatment plant in the chosen municipality of Senné. The study presents a very detailed analysis of the current chemical and ecological status of the Čierna Voda river basin, as well as the analysis of the current status. This is in all respects negative. It presents the direct and indirect causes of this situation while the most fundamental causes were identified as pollution of surface and groundwater flows from domestic

sewage and agricultural activities. It presents a complex overview of the drainage and treatment of municipal waste water in the project area. From the 27 affected municipalities in the project area only 2 built sewage and sanitary water treatment plants. This situation has extremely bad influence on the ecological and chemical status of the waters in the area. The status analysis is followed by the development of criteria for the prioritization of settlements (economic) and municipalities for the waste water disposal in an area. There is a priority list of municipalities and facilities that will be in future included in the investment projects and thus contribute to the main goal – good water condition in the Čierna Voda river basin. This principle criterion follows also the RBMP, which will be conducted by the SWME Košice for integrated management of river basins Bodrog, Laborec and Uh.

A special part is devoted to description and the importance of waste water treatment technology on the principle of water pollution elimination by growing /vegetation cycle and vegetation ability to use particular chemical elements for growth and photosynthesis.

The study outcome is the conceptual design of sewerage and wastewater treatment throughout the project area, including its alternatives. The proposal covers the municipalities or groups of municipalities/agglomerations, and the best way of wastewater disposal by standard technical measures and devices. Therefore it is a conceptual design of sewerage network construction and locating of wastewater treatment plants for municipality groups/agglomerations. The economic costs and effectiveness of such devices are estimated as well.

Summarizing all the above knowledge, criteria and priorities we can conclude, that the target should be municipalities, which:

- are of a size to about 500-700 inhabitants, with respect to the economic suitability of the type of biological waste water treatment plant: Čečehov, Hnojné, Jastrabie pri Michalovciach, Lúčky, Závadka, Blatná Polianka, Blatné Remety, Blatné Revištia, Bunkovce, Stretavka, Nižná Rybnica, Ostrov, Porostov, Svätuš, Tašuľa, Veľké Revištia, Kristy and Fekišovce (names of villages),
- sewerage is under the construction (project phase): Zalužice, Palín, Hnojné, Lúčky, Závadka, Blatná Polianka, Blatné Remety, Blatné Revištia, Veľké Revištia, Bunkovce and Bežovce (names of villages),
- directly or indirectly affect water quality in ponds Senianske: Blatná Polianka, Blatné Remety, Blatné Revištia, Veľké Revištia, Iňačovce, Jastrabie pri Michalovciach, Bunkovce (names of villages),
- directly or indirectly affect water quality in water course Čierna voda: Senné, Palín together with Stretava and Stretavka (names of flows and ponds).

The study does not address the economic availability of particular municipalities as well as other technical and technological possibilities and requirements for such a system (e.g. estate selection). Based on the study, however, the project documentation has been elaborated under the project for the construction of biological wastewater treatment plant for part of municipality Senné and adjacent castle/manor house, which is under reconstruction for tourism purposes.

*Elaborated analysis presents qualitative and quantitative values of the water. It states the poor status of the chemical but also ecological assessment of surface waters and groundwater in the Čierna Voda river basin. One of the major causes of this unacceptable status is besides agricultural activities also the absence of wastewater treatment from houses and municipalities. This study is followed by the RBMP as the main SWME managing document, as it is not possible*

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*to separate water management from good water status provision. Construction of biological sewage treatment plant is one of the best solutions for municipalities or group of municipalities/agglomerations. It also proposes the optimal sewerage networking and localization of joint waste water treatment plants so that the system was viable and feasible for municipalities.*

**7. Management plan: River Basin Management Plan Čierna voda** (SWME Žilina, Branch Košice 2009, M. Giba et al., December 2009, 126 pages).

Work on the preparation of the RBMP Čierna voda was one of the main activities of the project. RBMP preparation work has started independently from the project process, as responsible institution SWME Košice is liable by law for document processing of the management plans for river basin, as well as sub-basins. According to the report of SWME Košice (Branch Management Unit Košice), the Bodrog river basin, including the micro river basin Čierna Voda, is considered as sub-basin (its management plan was elaborated in accordance with methodological and mandatory regulations). The work was completed in 2009. Laborec - Uh project organised a public hearing during the annual conference of the project in May 2010. The Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic approved sub-basin management plans. Reference of RBMP Čierna Voda is mentioned in the complete RBMP Bodrog river, published on the project website and at SWME website. In addition to the text part of RBMP further information was added by the responsible SWME representatives – from the branch offices in Michalovce and Košice.

The main objective of the plan is to achieve good water status in a given river basin by 2015, pursuant to the Directive 2000/60/EC and its Annex No. VII. It comprises:

1. General characteristics description of the river basin administrative area
2. Summary of significant effects and impacts of human activities on the status of surface waters and groundwater
3. Identification and mapping of protected areas
4. Monitoring networks map
5. List of environmental objectives for surface waters, groundwater and protected areas
6. Economy analysis summary
7. Program or programs of measures summary
8. List of all more detailed programs and water management plans elaborated for given river basin administrative area
9. Summary of measures taken to inform the public
10. Overview of competent authorities
11. Contact points and procedures for accessing the supporting documents

Significant impacts on the surface waters and groundwater quality (chemical and ecological) were analyzed, hydro-morphological impacts and significant effects on the quantitative indicators groundwater and surface waters were assessed. The water pollution sources: point, shape and linear, were identified. The entire water system in the project area is modified and formed by the system of artificial channels and handling facilities. This led to the longitudinal continuity disruption of watercourses and their lateral conjunction. The resulting effect is complete area drainage and a high energy consuming drainage and water regulatory system. Based on these analyses, as well as the hydrological models developed by the STU, the environmental objectives were set for the surface and groundwater bodies and for protected areas, which depend on sufficient supply of surface water and

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groundwater. Since the mentioned system is extremely difficult for various reasons, the risk analysis to achieve these objectives was performed at three levels. RBMP Čierna Voda was prepared including procedures of water status improvement and focusing on:

- reduction of surface and groundwater pollution,
- improvement of groundwater quantitative status,
- restoration of impaired lateral continuity of surface water bodies,
- restoration of linear continuity of surface water bodies.

The main outcome is the specification of the technical and handling measures and water management in the given territory. That outcome is simultaneously descriptive and well illustrated graphically, including supplementary measures, such as change of vegetation surface to prevent soil erosion, woods planting on the channel banks, regular cleaning of channel systems, handling equipment repairs as well as continuous monitoring of surface water quality.

*It needs to be emphasized, that the RBMP was prepared as planned project output with the contribution of technical, technological and model materials. SWME gained valuable experience how to elaborate the RBMP, which was prepared ahead of the legislative obligation to elaborate sub-basins management plans in the Slovak Republic. It forms the content of The Water Framework Directive and became an example of cooperation with all stakeholders within the country, municipalities and research institute.*

**8. Study: Summary of restoration measures under the Laborec-Uh project.** (Daphne, D. Galvanek, July 2012, 11 pages).

Several practical restoration/restitution/recovery measures were carried out in the project area, based on the local problem analysis. Two types of measures were implemented: the first one was the improvement of the land hydrological regime in the project area (6 specific measures), which should contribute to the biodiversity protection, and the second type of measure was the change of land use, towards more appropriate utilization with regard to natural territory layout.

Reparation of the water lock/gate in Cibavka enables better water management balance especially in Senné ponds. The experiment to return water to land completely drained in the past by technical measures (hydromelioration measures) partly failed due to dissenting views of the land owners (farmers), who thought that land waterlogging would prevent its agricultural use.

The handling device for water intake in Blatá, northeast from Senné ponds, was fixed, as well as an adjacent field path, which also served to prevent water runoff. Both measures helped to ensure steady water level on the site wetland with open water surface. It can be undoubtedly considered beneficial.

Several measures for protection of birds and their habitats were implemented on site Ostrovík though not as the project activities. It was mainly the land acquisition (SOS/Birdlife) and creating water bodies for birds by deepening of *Carex* depressions. Insufficient and/or inappropriate flooding regime was identified as a long-term problem. The biotope of shallow flooded alluvial grasslands was missing. Therefore the Project implemented two measures – rising and fixing of the southwest dam site and reparation of locks on melioration channels estuary in Čierna Voda. Simultaneously a proper flood grasslands management regime was implemented, mainly by mowing. This was rapidly reflected in a vegetation (botanical) biotope composition change and at the same time resulted in increased nesting birds number, particularly wading bird species bound to flooded grasslands.

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Another measure implemented was improvement of Trnava wetlands (wet grasslands) condition, located eastern of Senne ponds. By simply raising of the dam crest, with a field path on it, and fitting small lock, a suitable wetland water amount was ensured, which is also a vital nesting birds biotope.

Arable soil grassing in Hažín and Senné led to change in existing land use. Local farmers, however, have shown only little interest in the change of agricultural use of allocated farming estates. Initially it was assumed to change 100 hectares area of agricultural land for permanent grassland. Grassing was implemented on two sites: aprx. 30 ha area in the cadastral district Hažín in the fall of 2011, and 5 ha in the cadastre Senné.

The establishment of non-forest vegetation on agricultural land is intended to diversify the landscape structure by addition of non-forest vegetation, especially in large scale arable acres. Setting up small groves and alleys was carried out at 6 locations in municipalities Čečehov, Jastrabie pri Michalovciach, Iňačovce, Čierne Pole, Bajany a Bunkovce. A feasibility study was elaborated and actual afforestation took place in the fall of 2012.

Pros and cons evaluated in the study:

- fairly large territory was addressed – project team could flexibly react and replace restoration locations in case that some negotiations failed,
- detailed territory mapping,
- the partnership with SOS / Birdlife Slovakia, owning agricultural land in location Ostrovík near Senne, was successfully utilized, it prepared several restoration activities proposals,
- several restoration project activities continued in activities of the LIFE project focused on birds protection,
- the project also involved activities aimed at local development, what improved the project perception by local residents and their better participation in project activities,
- major problem of the territory is the enormous dependence on external sources (mainly subsidies). These in some cases distort local residents thinking so much that instead of thoughtful farming they only respond to actual subsidies policy regardless of the natural and economic features of the region.
- low awareness and resistance of concerned public key representatives, mainly farmers who do not allow changes that could jeopardize their business and agricultural activities.

*The final report summarizes the obtained results of direct measures in the project territory, while one measure type has the integrated landscape management character (hydrological regime improvement in order to increase water input to grasslands and wetlands formation) and a second type focuses on the change of arable land to grasslands and habitats typical for this landscape type. The main limitation of these measures was willingness of landowners and agricultural entities to cooperate. Therefore planned measures could not be carried out in the entire project scope and change of arable land to meadows and pastures has been successfully done with the owner consent on the area of 34 hectares and water input to grasslands on around 100 hectares. In order to improve water manipulation in channels, some handling facilities (bypass dams and locks) have been modified and also dams adjusted and supplementary devices constructed. By changing arable land to grassland habitats the goal of proper species composition of grasses and other associated flowering plants, with gradual extension of protected plant species, was pursued at the same time. The last measure was the planting of*



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*shrub and non-forest vegetation to enrich the country's forest ecosystems and landscape diversity of the project territory and these planted components also play an important ecological role (anti-erosion measures, nesting chances, etc.). Several measures improved also the status of SPA - Protected Bird Area Senianske ponds, mainly by habitats expansion appropriate to stabilize protected bird species.*

**9. Study: Report on the vegetation monitoring of restoration interventions on sites Ostrovík, Blatá and Senné-South in the years 2010-12.** (Daphne, D. Galvanek, October 2012, 7 pages).

This report summarizes the results of a detailed monitoring of vegetation development in selected permanent grassland areas. Monitoring is led empirically according to standardized and well-established methodology and results are processed in GIS environment. Monitoring of selected grasslands (grassland habitats) began in 2010 and it gained the habitats baseline from the quality and quantity perspective. At the same time the imposed measures impact on the quality and character of the grassland habitats (water regime and farming practices modification) was studied. Aim of the final study is to evaluate the current vegetation development on the monitored areas and the effectiveness of restoration interventions.

A total 28 grasslands were monitored, 8 in the Ostrovík location, 4 on the Blatá site, 17 in the Senné south area and 1 east of Trnava ponds site on the area of about 33 hectares. Main effects that could change the nature of grassland habitats were a gradual change in the water regime affecting the given area as well as the gradual decline in ruderal (weed) species. One of the measures was shallow terrain depression creation, which necessitated water retention capacity in the territory as well as the specific water habitats formation. At the same time they became feeding sites for birds nesting in the area. The study is complemented by charts, maps and development schemes.

The overall summary of the monitoring results (as of October 2012) mentions positive restoration measures impact and the positive development in the vegetation composition. This is particularly true of sites Ostrovík and Blatá. On site Senné-south no significant positive changes appeared during the monitoring period, however they are expected to occur in longer horizon. This should be reinforced by the appropriate regular areas management. In Trnava location positive development changes could not be verified.

Initial grassland habitats status was given by mapping results summarized in the final report „The results of grassland habitats mapping in the project territory Laborec-Uh and the framework draft restoration measures“ (Daphne, Mgr. D. Galvánek, Mgr. R. Lassák, Mgr. B. Immerová, November 2009, 22 pages).

*The final report presents the monitoring results of restoration measures, as described above. Due to the short time it was not possible to evaluate thoroughly the ecological restoration activities.*

**10. Study: Management and restoration measures proposal for the project territory Laborec-Uh.** (Daphne, D. Galvánek, R. Lasák, B. Immerová, September 2010, 11 pages).

This is the final report identifying the need and localization of restoration measures aimed at restoration procedures suitable for the wetlands and grassland habitats in the project territory. This report elaborated and refined the proposed restoration and management measures so that they could

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serve as the practical basis for the proposals negotiation with local territory users. It is one of the most important outcomes of the project.

The final report has two main parts:

1. Types of management and restoration interventions
2. Precise measures localization in the project territory elaborated in GIS environment.

Described management measures relate to:

- Maintenance mowing
- Restoration mowing
- Pasture
- Mulching
- Fertilization and the chemical safety equipment usage
- Pioneer woods removal from grasslands
- Enrichment of species-poor grasslands
- Restoration of species-rich grasslands on arable land
- Change of hydrological land regime

Every action and restoration activity is described in detail, areas where the mentioned activities should be implemented, are marked on the GIS maps. However it does not address conflicts of interest (e.g. for measure No. 8, where this measure faces opposition of agricultural land owners and farmers, or measure No. 9).

*The final report is a synthesis of the required measures, in various parts of the project territory and the Čierna Voda river basin, to achieve the overall environmental and ecosystem synergy effect. These measures should bring the most significant impact which will be verified through the evaluation of quality and quantity of water regime in the project territory, character of protected areas National Nature Reserve Senianske ponds and SPA024 Senianske ponds. At the same time, required management measures are described in detail for specified locations.*

#### **11. Study: Draft options for restoration measures implemented by local communities in the Laborec-Uh project territory.** (Daphne, D. Galvánek, R. Lasák, September 2012, 9 pages).

This is the final report dealing with landscape renewal. The report provides a brief summary of the territorial and technical concepts for project territory restoration activities, which should be carried out in the follow-up activities. The goal is not to provide detailed ecological restoration instructions, but based on field analysis it allocates the most suitable and crucial areas in a GIS environment, where the ecological recovery is necessary. Except the location it also proposes the target and method of ecological restoration/recovery.

Final report builds on results of project reports and activities conducted in 2009 and 2010, which summarised grassland habitats mapping results, and management measures for grassland habitats and restoration measures.

It can be concluded, that there is a relatively high share of grassland habitats within the project territory. Their current use is mostly unsuitable for the ecosystem territory management, as well as for nature protection (SPA - protected birds area). Part of the grasslands is abandoned and not used at all. These sites are an opportunity mainly for smaller farmers, who in case of interest could resume regular agricultural use (mowing, pasture).

Final report in graphic and narrative form addresses the following issues:

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- agricultural use of abandoned grasslands restoration,
  - sites suitable for agricultural use restoration of grasslands converting arable land to meadows and pastures. Priority should be given to fields partially affected by water, mainly by occasional flooding or seepage,
  - planting of non-forest vegetation or forest renewal,
  - sites particularly suitable for the land hydrological regime management (sites with remainder of the original river beds), that would be used as part of integrated river basin management,
  - ecological renewal of existing water courses.

There is a significant lack of interest of land owners and farmers in the proposed measures, as well as lack of information on the land ownership structure. The Project managed to convert arable land to pasture in the area of 34 hectares at two locations in the cadastral Hažín and Senné. Interest was thus significantly lower than expected. This fact is related with the current improper subsidy system for lowlands. Similarly, the non-forest vegetation renewal was successful only on the municipal areas with the consent of some mayors.

*The final report is a three year evaluation summary of the project territory in terms of the ecological renewal need – the conversion of arable land to grasslands, their proper ecosystem management and other measures related to integrated river basin management. It is an important component and the proposal of follow-up activities after overcoming the resistance of landowners and farmers, who use these selected areas only for intensive agriculture with a low value level of country ecosystem functions. This report is a key output and part of the LDIS.*

The other supporting documents - studies that were examined in the Project evaluation, are worth to mention because of their topicality:

12. **Report on the vegetative monitoring of restoration interventions in Ostrovík and Blatá locations in the year 2010.** (Daphne, D. Galvánek, January 2011, 11 pages),
13. **Report on the vegetative monitoring of restoration interventions in Ostrovík and Blatá locations in the year 2011.** (Daphne, D. Galvánek, February 2012, 18 pages),
14. **Proposal of arable land grassing, used by self employed farmers around Senné and in the Blatá site** (Daphne, D. Galvánek, May 2011, 4 pages).

Mentioned reports were of interim character and they informed about the ongoing project activities at a given time. The proposal for a change of arable land to meadows was implemented at the plot owned by one of the small farmers.