



FINAL REPORT

Strengthening implementation of Natura 2000 in Slovenia - Communication support to implementation of Natura 2000

TRANSITION FACILITY IDENTITY NUMBER 2006/S 55-057662 ("SERVICES")

Date:
12th October 2007

Contracting Authority:
Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia

Steering Committee:

Janez Kastelic, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Chairman
Mateja Kocjan, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Member
Dušan Gačnik, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Member
Peter Skoberne PhD, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Member
Anton Lesnik, spec., Slovenian Forest Service, Member
Jernej Demšar PhD, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, Member
Stanka Dešnik, Goričko Landscape Park (park management representative), Member
Boštjan Lovka, Government Office for European Affairs, Monitor
Peter Škofič, CFPE, Ministry of Finance, Monitor

Project leader:

Breda Ogorelec, M. A., Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

Consortium:

Pristop d.o.o., Consortium Leader
Pristop Consensus, d.o.o., Partner
RRA Notranjsko-kraške regije d.o.o., Partner
Nastop plus d.o.o., Partner
Renderspace d.o.o., Partner
Kline & partner d.o.o., Partner

Team leader:

Špela Polak, senior consultant, Pristop Consensus d.o.o.

1. SUMMARY

Key contract provisions

The Consortium that consists of six organisations and is led by company Pristop d.o.o. was selected on basis of a public tender. The contract was signed on 14 September 2006 and is valid for 13 months - through to 14 October 2007.

Total resources needed for completing objectives and tasks set forth in the public tender were estimated at 428,000 EUR, 60 per cent of which are given in prepayment, while the remaining 40 per cent are to be paid when the final report will have been confirmed.

The contractor prepared a report at the end of each separate trimester, which was then submitted for review and confirmation by the Steering Committee. The contractor provided the following reports:

- Inception Report (December 2006)
- 1st Interim Report (March 2007)
- 2nd Interim Report (June 2007)
- Draft Final Report (September 2007)
- Final Report (October 2007)

Tender documentation, annexed to the contract, defines the following categories:

- Completing determined objectives
- Tasks to be performed by the contractor (document drafting, task execution)
- Timeline regarding activity execution
- Reporting to and co-operation with the contracting authority and the Steering Committee

Final Report

'The Final Report' is the fourth report prepared in the frames of the project. It includes the following:

- Review of all activities performed during the entire project
- Review of key events that affected execution of the project itself, and possible problems that occurred while performing contract obligations
- Evaluation of the project's effect measured with regards to previously determined objectives and achievement indicators included in the 'log-frame' matrix
- Recommendations for further activities to be performed by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
- Appendixes containing key documents prepared by the contractor and adjusted with the contracting authority during the project

Co-operation

Consortium members were involved in orderly co-operation with the contracting authority in forms of regular weekly meetings, adjustments over the telephone, and adjustments via electronic mail. All materials were reviewed by the contracting authority; namely, they include all given suggestions, remarks and recommendations. Certain materials and contents were also reviewed by representatives of other organisations - they are referred to in the text below. Solutions and propositions given by other representatives with logical reference to contents and manners of execution were also taken into consideration.

2. DEFINITION OF ACTIVITIES SET FORTH IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

The communication support project designated for Natura 2000 should complete four fundamental objectives determined in the tender documentation:

- Achieving recognition of the Natura 2000 ecological network
- Placing bio-diversity conservation among Slovenia's key development opportunities
- Equipped and qualified network of communicators
- Stakeholders' willingness to take part in bio-diversity conservation in the frames of Natura 2000

Following directions provided by the contracting authority, the contractor determined communication objectives given below. Starting points and measurement throughout the project were set forth in its initial phase:

During the project

- Informing about Natura 2000
- Attaining comprehension of Natura 2000
- Attaining inclination toward Natura 2000

Long-term objectives

- Attaining intended behaviour - support to Natura 2000
- Activities performed by determined goal groups - preferred behaviour

In accordance with project documentation, the contractor defined 24 tasks to be executed during the project - each task includes timeline for its execution:

1- Research phase

The task was completed in the first trimester.

2- Communication strategy

The task was completed in the first trimester.

3- Action plans

Throughout the project based on trimester plans.

4- Implementation of action plans

Implementation in line with the communication plan.

5- Provisions needed to attain adjusted communication on the national level

The plan was prepared in the first trimester. Organisational measures were anticipated for entire duration of the project.

6- Upgrading the Natura 2000 website

Throughout the project.

7- Evaluation of communication efficiency

Throughout the project.

8- Consultations and co-operation with the contracting authority's team

Throughout the project.

9- Interviews with key stakeholders

In the first trimester and in the concluding phase of the project.

10- Communication strategy for reaching decision-makers
The task was completed in the second trimester.

11- Identification of communicators' needs regarding education, communication and promotional materials
The task was completed in the first trimester.

12- Training programme for communicators and preparation of the handbook
The first, second and the third trimester.

13- Q&A handbook
Preparation of a new, supplemented version each trimester.

14- Communicators training
Preparations for execution in the second trimester - execution in the third trimester.

15- Upgrading the e-Natura 2000 bulletin
Initially planned for the second trimester; having obtained the contracting authority's consent, the task was carried over to the third trimester.

16- Suggestions for motivating stakeholders to take part in Natura 2000 management
The task was completed in the first trimester.

17- Participatory workshops with stakeholders in local areas
In the second and the third trimesters - activities included in this task were later re-directed onto communication support to the Operational programme - the Natura 2000 management programme.

18- Promotional package for communicating Natura 2000
The designation stage in the second, and execution in the third trimester.

19- Potential image adjustment
Planning and implementation in the second and the third trimesters.

20- Internal communication within organisations communicators come from
Throughout the project.

21- Monitoring and assessment of communication activities
Throughout the project.

21- Monitoring and assessment of communication activities
Following completion of its research phase, the task was being executed throughout the project.

23- Execution of activities and report preparation
Throughout the project.

24- Final report including directions to the contracting authority for future communication
The task was performed in the final stage of the project.

The first trimester mostly constituted of the research phase and of designing and preparation processes regarding activities that were to be completed in subsequent phases of the project. The second trimester could broadly be defined as a preparation period for activity execution in the following stages of the project, and as a period already providing the first visible results.

The third trimester mainly consisted of performing previously planned activities. The last stage of the project was dedicated to activity conclusions and final assessments.

The tender documentation defines the following activities to be completed in the concluding period of the final trimester:

- Review of all activities executed in the frames of the project
- Result summary and definition of key problems that occurred while performing contract activities
- Assessment of the project's influence - assessment with reference to previously determined project objectives and indicators defined in the in the 'log-frame' matrix

Furthermore, we completed the following activities:

- Evaluation report with references to the preliminary evaluation plan
- Communication strategy with recommendations regarding further activities to be performed by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning

Presentation of the project team

The project team consists of company Pristop d.o.o. acting as the Consortium Leader and of representatives of the following organisations acting as its partners:

- Pristop Consensus, d.o.o.
- RRA Notranjsko-kraške regije d.o.o.
- Nastop plus d.o.o.
- Renderspace d.o.o.
- Kline & partner d.o.o.

Performing its tasks, the Consortium constantly co-operates with Breda Ogorelec, representative of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. Moreover, majority of project activities included Mateja Kocjan, representative of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and Stanka Dešnik, representative of the Goričko regional park. Other individuals only took part in separate project activities.

Project activities given bellow were performed in the Consortium's co-operation with sub-contractors:

- Media monitoring and analyses of media reporting, evaluation analyses of separate workshops - Kliping d.o.o.
- Public opinion poll and report - Episcenter d.o.o.
- Acquisition and printing of promotional materials - Promart d.o.o.
- External expert co-operators - Jana Kus Veenvliet, Symbiosis Institute; Špela Habič, Slovenian Forest Service, Regional Unit Postojna
- Venue and catering at workshops - Monsadria, d.o.o., Terme Maribor, d.d., Epic nepremičnine, d.o.o., Terme Krka, d.o.o., Novo mesto, Regional Chamber of Craft of Kranj, Catering Žiga Leber, s.p., Regional Development Agency of Celje, d.o.o., and Mateja Gaber, s.p.
- Media-spave lease for award-winning games - through agencies BrandMedia d.o.o. and iMedia d.o.o.: Gorenjski glas, Novi tednik Celje, Primorske novice, Notranjske novice, Vestnik Murska Sobota, Dolenjski list, Ognjišče, Nedeljski dnevnik, Kmečki glas, Razvedrilo, Cosmopolitan.si, Smrklja.si, Mojforum.si, Diva.si, Ona-on.net, Najdi.si, CikCak.info
- Venue and catering at the signing of the Countdown 2010 declaration - Turistična kmetija pri Lazarju

Other organisations we co-operated with while performing individual activities:

- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia
- Slovenian Forest Service
- SOS - Community of Slovenian Municipalities
- ZOS - Association of Slovenian Municipalities
- Parks representatives

- Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Development
- Non-governmental organisations

3. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES COMPLETED THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

The following review includes all activities that were performed during entire projects. Furthermore, the review provides physical evidence obtained during separate project phases.

Tasks 1 and 9 - Research phase and interviews with key stakeholders

The research phase was completed in the first trimester. The following documents were prepared: report referring to the research phase, public opinion poll and report, focused interviews and report on focused interviews, review of good practices, media monitoring and analysis of media reporting, 'desk-top' analysis, review of ongoing activities. Communication strategy was designated and implemented on basis of results obtained in this project phase.

The part referred to in this section is supplemented with tasks 7 and 21 - namely, the four tasks overlap one another.

Physical evidence:

Report regarding the research phase (included in the first report - the 'Inception Report')
Appendix 1 - Report on focused interviews from the initial stage of the project

Tasks 3, 4 and 23 - Action plans and their implementation, execution of activities and report preparation

The tasks apply to all activities, hence they are not referred to separately. The system of reporting by individual tasks was selected to assure better comprehension. The following events affected the project course considerably:

- The Operational programme - management programme (final adjustments and preparations for reception at a sitting of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia)
- Taking part at the Agriculture Fair in Gornja Radgona
- Organisation of the signing of the Countdown 2010 declaration

Physical evidence:

Communication plans designated for individual trimesters and separate contents (communication plans were included in individual reports - the 'Inception Report', '1st Interim Report', '2nd Interim Report')

Task 5- Measures needed to achieve adjusted communication on the national level

The contractor prepared a recommendation regarding a new organisational structure in the first trimester. The initial plan was adjusted on subsequent meetings. Prior to the conclusion of the project, we prepared a short recommendation for the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning providing organisational definitions at a sitting of the government of the Republic of Slovenia.

Physical evidence:

Annex 2 - Short recommendation for organisational definition regarding management of Natura 2000

Tasks 6 and 15 - Upgrading the Natura 2000 website, and the e-Natura bulletin

In line with confirmed alternations to the implementation of the project, we conducted an upgrading of the Natura 2000 website and the eNatura electronic bulletin. Website visitors' responses throughout the project were positive. Unfortunately, statistical monitoring was not possible out of technical reasons. However, visitor monitoring using a special programme -

Google Analytics - is anticipated once the website will have been transmitted to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning's server.

Physical evidence:

The website's address was given in the '2nd Interim Report' - www.natura2000.gov.si

Tasks 7 and 21- Evaluation of communication efficiency and monitoring and assessment of communication activities

Analyses of media reporting were prepared in three-month intervals (the time period for the concluding phase of the project was extended). The contractor was monitoring media reports throughout the project. All determined objectives but one are accomplished; the exceptional objective registered a discrepancy of a 0.7 percentage point in assuring the percentage of favourable report in separate analysed periods - the objective was 12 %, while registered result totalled 11.3 % (reason is to be found in absolute augmentation of the number of reports).

Moreover, the contractor measured the success rate of individual workshops for communicators (altogether seven workshops). All determined objectives were exceeded.

The contractor assessed the success rate of all award-winning games. All objectives were accomplished.

Evaluation of online visits was impossible due to technical reasons - useless initial data and obstructed transfer to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning's server. Hence, we are only able to evaluate them through content comments provided by online visitors, and indirectly by analysing answers to award-winning questions.

The public-opinion analysis was conducted prior to and following the project. All the objectives met the ones determined previously.

A detailed report on objective accomplishment is given in the report's appendix incorporating all measurements.

Physical evidence:

Annex 3 - Final report on conducted measurements and completion of determined project objectives

Task 8- Consulting and co-operation with the contractor's team

The task was being performed throughout entire project. In the frames of the project, we co-operated with the Sector for Nature Conservation Policy, the Public Relations Office and with the Minister's Cabinet. The contractors would like to point out to responsiveness of and co-operation with all subjects included in the project, but especially those offered by Breda Ogorelec. Due to its condensed dynamics, the project demanded high responsiveness of the contracting party. Furthermore, the contractor would like to thank all co-workers coming from various organisations (above all Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and the Regional park of Goričko), whose co-operation contributed to successful completion of the project.

Physical evidence:

The contractor prepared reminders and minutes of all meetings; however, these are not included in this report.

Task 10- Communication strategy for reaching decision-makers on the national level

Co-operation of variegated intensity with decision-makers took place throughout entire project. Co-operation was above all intense in the final phase of the project - the Agriculture Fair in Gornja Radgona. Additionally, this activity included preparation of a list of all ministries and sectors encountering Natura 2000 while performing their work.

Physical evidence:

Communication strategy for reaching decision-makers (annexed to the '1st Interim Report')
Annex 4 - Review of sectors by separate ministries taking part in Natura 2000

Tasks 11, 12 and 14 - Identification of communicators' needs regarding trainings and promotional materials; training programme for communicators, handbook elaboration and communicators training

The research part of the tasks took place in the first trimester, and planning of the training programme for communicators was conducted in the second trimester. Seven meetings and the handbook were conducted and prepared respectively in the second half of the project. Adjustments with the contracting party and representatives of other organisations that communicators come from were taking place throughout the project.

Physical evidence:

Final report on conducting the training programme for communicators (annexed to the '2nd Interim Report')
Annex 5 - Handbook for communicators

Task 13- Q&A Handbook

We prepared three versions of the Q&A handbook.

Physical evidence:

Questions and answers were included in separate reports the 'Inception Report', '1st Interim Report', '2nd Interim Report').

Task 16 - Recommended techniques motivating stakeholders to take part in managing areas included in Natura 2000

The document was prepared in the first trimester; its content was later included in the training programme for communicators.

Physical evidence:

Recommendations for motivating stakeholders to take part in managing Natura 2000 (annexed to the 'Inception Report')

Task 17- Participatory workshops with stakeholders in local areas / support to management programme

Consistent to an agreement reached with the contracting party, we conducted the management support programme instead of participatory workshops. This included written materials, two workshops (organisation, implementation) aimed at accumulating observations to the management programme and one workshop dedicated to evolve communication recommendations serving as an appendix to the management programme. Furthermore, adjustments regarding communication took place with an external expert co-worker and Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation.

Physical evidence:

Communication plan supporting the management programme (annexed to the '2nd Interim Report')

Task 18- Promotional package for communicating Natura 2000

The research phase included identification of communicators' needs regarding promotional materials. This was followed by material designation and fabrication. Hence, each communicator receives: 1 T-shirt, 1 rucksack, 130 note-pads, 130 crayons and 150 pencils.

In addition to the package prepared for communicators, we organised a series of award-winning games. Initially, separate award-winning games took place in regional print media (Gorenjski glas, Novi tednik Celje, Primorske novice and Notranjske novice, Vestnik Murska Sobota, Dolenjski list), followed by award-winning games in the media covering the national level and thus corresponding to goal groups determined by researches (Ognjišče, Nedeljski dnevnik, Kmečki glas, Razvedrilo) and online media (Cosmopolitan.si, Smrklja.si, Mojforum.si, Diva.si, Ona-on.net, CikCak.info). Award-winning games were also organised at the Agriculture Fair in Gornja Radgona (seven days - each day a new award-winning game). All winners received their awards by post. All participants that sent us their answers with included e-mail addresses will receive eNatura.

Physical evidence:

Rules of the award winning game were posted on the website (posted on the <http://www.natura2000.gov.si/index.php?id=159> website; annexed to the '2nd Interim Report') Annex 6 - Media plan and example of an ad

Task 19 - Task 19- Potential image adjustment

The contractor provided image adjustment and re-implemented the independent Natura 2000 logo. The image expresses variegation and colourfulness of nature - we used colours found in nature. The image was included in the PPT presentation, on the website, in ads, in promotional materials and in all materials designed during the project.

Physical evidence:

The contracting authority received all the materials on CDs.

Task 20- Internal communication in communicators' organisations

We prepared and distributed four information for internal notifying in organisations that communicators come from. This information was prepared for the following organisations: ZRSVN, KGZS, ZGS, and the parks.

Task 22- Media relations

In the frames of media relations, the contractor prepared basic infrastructure (structured list of media - national and regional). We prepared and distributed a media report regarding Natura 2000 brands. The contractor took part in preparing a press conference, at which the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning presented the management programme. Moreover, the contractor took part in designing project material for the moving press conference in Barje. The contractor co-operated in material preparations and at the discussion with a Dnevnik's journalist. This task also included preparing news and invitations to the Agriculture Fair in Gornja Radgona (round table and presentation of Natura 2000).

The table shows comparative key data obtained from separate media analyses:

Period	No. of reports	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable	No. of appearances and reports on significance of Natura 2000
September to November 2006	108	28 % (30)	70 % (76)	2 % (2)	19 appearances (19 reports)
November to February 2007	211	10 % (21)	84 % (178)	6 % (12)	52 appearances (47 reports)
February to May 2007	299	12 % (36)	85 % (255)	2 % (8)	31 appearances (27 reports)
June to	294	12 % (34)	84 % (249)	4 % (11)	63 appearances

September 2007					(61 reports)
Average	228	15.5 % (30.25)	80.75 % (189.5)	3.5 % (8.25)	41.25 appearances (38.5 reports)

Physical evidence:

Annex 7- Analysis of media reporting in the last project phase

Task 24 - Final report with recommendations for further communication activities regarding Natura 2000 following project completion

This document represents completion of the task.

Physical evidence:

Annex 8 - Communication strategy following completion of the project

4. REVIEW OF KEY EVENTS AFFECTING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, AND OF POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

Due to the broad range of activities, it is reasonable to point out to individual activities of more importance for the project:

- Preparation and conduction of the training for communicators (connected to the handbook and promotional materials)
- Award-winning games (dissemination, orientation toward goal groups according to research results)
- Upgrading the eNatura website
- Communication support to the management programme
- Round-table and presentation at the Agricultural Fair in Gornja Radgona, with daily award-winning games
- Signing of the Countdown 2010 declaration - the task was initially planned to take place during the project, but was out of objective reasons postponed upon after the project conclusion due

Key events affecting project implementation:

- Designation of the management programme for reception a sitting of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia)
- Communication activities at the Agricultural Fair in Gornja Radgona
- Signing the Countdown 2010 declaration

Conducting the project in general, we did not perceive any significant problem. Co-operation between the contracting party and all other organisations taking part in Natura 2000 was benevolent throughout the project. Certain tasks demanded additional time, but it is possible to conclude that significant steps were taken even in cases of tasks previously anticipating only strategy preparations. Based on groundwork, certain organisational and communication steps have already been taken.

5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT'S INFLUENCE (according to the 'log-frame' matrix)

Based on intensive co-operation with the contracting party and other separate organisations, the Consortium completed all tasks set forth in the project documentation. Individual tasks were slightly adjusted - in either their comprehension or the execution timeline, during the course of the project. It is in the contractor's belief that these alterations did not have any

considerable affect on objectives - according to already accumulated information, they did not interfere substantially with the project in general. However, final measurements might still provide different results.

Project results are evident from the entire report, but they are measured and provided in detail in the final report on conducted evaluation and goal achievement (appendix 6).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIVITIES TO BE PERFORMED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING

In the concluding phase of the project, the contractor would like to point out to certain conclusions that the contracting party should take into regard when conducting subsequent communication activities regarding Natura 2000.

1. Organisational re-arrangement into project leadership - individual tasks to be accomplished by separate organisations should be defined more clearly (co-operation, reporting, adjusting) and intensified by formal ways of co-operation among institutions.
2. Dissemination of sources regarding communicating Natura 2000 - based on this fact, it is reasonable to expect that central ascendance to all activities applying to Natura 2000 would be possible. Hence, it is even more important to formalise this part of activities; in the second part, it would be reasonable to stimulate informal co-operation and information exchange. Regarding resource dissemination, certain diversifications in communicating certain contents can be observed. We recommend the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning try to monitor these activities to the highest degree possible (also via information exchange) and mediate it in cases of misleading or false information.
3. Communicators
 - a. Clear definition of communicators' tasks would be in line with the task definition by various organisations - the contractor recommend continued motivation of their activities as 'ambassadors' of Natura 2000
 - b. Communication flows between the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning and communicators would be in line with the definition of communicators' roles
 - c. At least annual meetings of communicators giving opportunity for information exchange concerning both expert contents and examples of good practices are necessary
4. Communicating Natura 2000 from the part of the contractor
 - a. The contractor recommend continuation of pro-active communication, above all of examples of good practices, and exchange of information regarding current formal activities
 - b. Furthermore, the contractor recommends the contracting party co-operates with other organisations active in the field of Natura 2000 (directing communication)

Natura 2000 has its communication potential on the national, as well as on the regional and local levels. Furthermore, Natura 2000 is well managed from the organisational point of view. It still requires additional system determinations and clearer delimitating tasks assigned to individual institutions. The latter is logical due to the expected increase in activities applying to Natura 2000 and to be determined on the European Union level. Besides, Slovenia is introducing bio-diversity conservation as one of the priority issues during its EU presidency in the first half of 2008.

7. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE UPCOMING PERIOD

A communication strategy pertaining to the contracting party's including recommendation for activities planned for the upcoming year will be provided on bases of final evaluations.

8. APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 - Report on focused interviews conducted in the initial part of the project

Appendix 2 - Short recommendation regarding organisational definition of Natura 2000 management

Appendix 3 - Final report on conducted measurement and completion of determined objectives

Annex 4 - Review of sectors by separate ministries connected to Natura 2000

Appendix 5 - Handbook for communicators

Appendix 6 - Media plan and an example of an ad

Appendix 7- Analysis of media reporting in the final phase of the project

Appendix 8 - Communication strategy to be implemented following the completing phase of the project

ABBREVIATIONS

MOP = Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

MKGP = Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food

ZRSVN = Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation

ZGS = Slovenian Forest Service

KGZS = Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia

DOPPS = Bird Life Slovenia

SVLR = Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy