

Project on

**"Management of Natura 2000 sites –
needs, possibilities, perspectives"
(BANAT-MP)**

FINAL REPORT

May 1, 2003 – September 30, 2005

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Donors of the BANAT MP:



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz
und Reaktorsicherheit

Ministry of Environment, Nature
Protection and Nuclear Safety,
Federal Republic of Germany



Environmental Protection Fund,
Latvia

**“MANAGEMENT OF NATURA 2000 SITES – NEEDS, POSSIBILITIES, PERSPECTIVES”
FINAL REPORT**

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Introduction

The idea of the project has derived from the workshops and discussions held within trilateral project of the Baltic Environmental Forum on “Baltic States’ regional preparation for Natura 2000” (BANAT), which showed a need for more deeper knowledge and experience exchange on management of Natura 2000 sites as well as its organisational, financial and socio-economic aspects.

The project “Management of Nature 2000 sites – needs, possibilities, perspectives” (BANAT-MP) was formed to assist Latvian nature conservation authorities in the process of establishment of the management system for Natura 2000 sites and rising knowledge about its socio-economic aspects. Project included practical work in preparation of the management plans, discussion rounds and negotiations with stakeholders groups involved in management of the territories and organising information exchange and trainings for experts involved in the management planning.

The project was funded by Germany - Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety and by Latvia – Environmental Protection Fund.

The project was implemented from May 2003 till the end of September 2005 (including 5 month prolongation as agreed at the project Steering group). Additional one month was granted (without additional financing) to finalise the project due to delays with approval of management plans by local authorities.

Objectives of the project:

During the first steering group meeting of the project the objectives have been revised as follows:

- Elaboration of 4-5 management plans for certain protected territories (future Natura 2000 sites), based on Manual for Preparation of the MPs for Special Nature Protected Territories and Recommendations signed by the Minister of Environment;
- Development of knowledge and tools for implementation of management plans (agro-economic measures, financing tools);
- Launching of the first pilot implementation activities of the prepared management plans;
- Public information and rising of public awareness for Natura 2000 process upon different stakeholders (in frame of preparation of the particular management plans);
- Clarification of economic and social impacts out of Natura 2000 process;
- Exchange of experience on management of Natura 2000 sites on European level;
- Development of a long-term co-operation and information exchange between the participating experts and countries/regions;
- Identification of further project topics (to be applied for e. g. in LIFE Nature).

The set objectives have been met, except two: launching of the first pilot implementation activities has been replaced with development of a project on implementation of the management plans for the Nature Park “Salaca River valley”, applied to the LIFE-Nature programme; exchange of experience on management of Natura 2000 sites on European level was taken over by the trilateral project BANAT 3, which has organised several workshops on different aspects of Natura 2000 site management involving representatives from the three Baltic States as well as other European countries.

Expected outputs

Referring to the project objectives as defined in the 1st Interim Report and 2nd Interim Report and taking into account modification in the scope of activities as agreed at the project steering group meetings, the following project outputs were defined:

- Management plans prepared for Nature Reserve “Randu meadows” and 3 stretches of the Nature park “Salaca River valley”.
- All management plans for the Nature Park “Salaca River valley” compiled in one document including proposal on individual protection and management rules for the whole territory.
- Developed project on implementation of the management plans for the Nature Park “Salaca River valley”.
- Increased awareness of local inhabitants about nature conservation issues and Natura 2000 through public information activities held by the project in “Randu meadows” and “Salaca River valley”.
- Socio-economic aspects in management of Natura 2000 sites analysed through elaboration of the management plans and case study on cost-benefit analyses on example of Nature Park “Salaca River valley”.
- Capacity and knowledge of nature conservation authorities and experts increased through participation in the training courses on public hearings and economic evaluation of the protected territories.

All the expected outputs have been achieved. Project has developed even more management plans than initially thought covering all 4 stretches of the Nature Park “Salaca River valley”. Analysis of the socio-economic aspects in management of Natura 2000 sites was extended by development of the manual on “Evaluation of Natura 2000 sites in economic terms”, which was published at the end of project, including as an annex the case study on “Cost-benefit analyses for the Nature Park “Salaca River valley””.

1. Project Administration:

Project staff:

Project manager	Ms. Heidrun Fammler
Project co-ordinator	Ms. Anda Ruskule
German project manager	Ms. Marianne Badura

Partly involved members of BEF team:

Project assistant	Ms. Māra Āboliņa (from May 2003 – January 2005)
	Ms. Alla Kudiņa (from February 2005 – May 2005)
	Ms. Dace Vītiņa (from June 2005 – October 2005)

Project accountant	Ms. Raina Krecere
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External experts contracted for the implementation of the project

Local experts:

Management plan for Nature Reserve “Randu meadows”:

- Otars Opermanis – information on birds;
- Ivars Kabucis – information on habitats and plants;
- Viesturs Melecis – information on invertebrates.

Management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”:

- Latvian Fund for Nature – information on terrestrial habitats, plants, birds, mammals, invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians;
- Jānis Birzaks – information on water habitats and fish species;
- Valda Baroniņa – information on grassland habitats and plants;
- Sandra Ikauniece – information of forest habitats and species.

Other local experts:

- Una Krutova - preparation of maps;
- Inga Račinska – content advice and editing of the management plans.
- Ilona Kirhenšteine – translation of the manual on “Evaluation of Natura 2000 sites in economic terms”
- Līga Eglīte – translation of the management plans and proof reading of the manual.

External experts:

- Jan Gittinger – trainer at the training on Public Hearings;
- Markus Leibenath – trainer at the training programme on socio-economic aspects.

2. Project implementation

The main focus of the BANAT-MP project activities was on elaboration of the management plans for protected territories, which was accompanied by series of meetings with involved stakeholders, supervisory board and experts to inform about process of preparation of the management plans and to discuss the main nature values of the territories, conservation goals and necessary management activities.

Additionally, the project has carried out capacity building actions for nature conservation administrations - a training course on public hearings was organised, to strengthen the process of public involvement in the frame of preparation of management plans for protected territories as well as a training programme on socio-economic aspects within management of Natura 2000 sites, including development of the manual on “Evaluation of Natura 2000 sites in Economic Terms”.

The list of all events carried out by the project from May 2003 till September 2005 is included in **Annex 2**, reports and participant lists from the main events in **Annex 3**.

2.1 Development of the management plans

In the very beginning of the project it was agreed to select protected areas for which management plans will be developed within the territory of North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve. As agreed with the project steering group, management plans were developed for the following territories:

- Nature reserve “Randu meadows”;
- Nature Park “The Salaca River valley” stretch *Mazsalaca-Staicele*;
- Nature Park “The Salaca River valley” stretch *Staicele – Rozēni* (revision of the draft version, prepared by UNDP/GEF project);
- Nature Park “The Salaca River valley” stretch *Rozēni – Mērnīki*;

- Nature Park “The Salaca River valley” stretch *Salacgrīva*;

Overview map with location of the territories for which management plans have been developed is attached in the **Annex 1**.

All management plans have been prepared in accordance to the Order of the Minister of Environment on “Recommendations for development of the management plans”, following the legal procedure defined in these recommendations, as well as based on Manual for Preparation of the management plans for Special Nature Protected Territories.

For each management plan a Supervisory Board was established by the Nature Conservation Board, which was called up 3-4 times to follow the development of management plan. Supervisory board included representatives from Nature Conservation Board, administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve, Local authorities, Regional Environmental Board, State Forest Service, State JSC “Latvijas Valsts Meži” (*Latvian State Forests*) and 1-2 landowners.

Elaboration of the each management plan included following steps:

- Contracting of experts for the field surveys and assesment of the nature values;
- Organisation of info- meeting for stakeholders on development procedure of the management plan;
- Carrying out of the field surveys on nature values and preparation of the reports by external experts;
- Carrying out of the field surveys on landscape values and tourism infrastructure by BEF;
- Compilation of the socio-economic, geographic and cadastral information by BEF;
- Development of the 1st draft:
 - Preparation of the description of the territory (legal requirements; general information; geographic description; biological description, socio-economic description);
 - Evaluation of the territory (nature conservation value of the territory in general, most important habitats and species, other values and impacting factors);
 - Definition of the goals for preservation of the territory;
 - Definition and description of the management measures;
 - Estimation of the management costs and identification of the potential financing sources;
 - Zoning of the territory;
 - Listing of conditions for implementation and reviewing of the plan;
 - Development of proposal on individual protection rules of the territory;
- Carrying out of meetings in parallel to the development of 1st draft:
 - 2-3 Supervisory board meetings;
 - Expert meetings depending on actual needs;
 - Meetings and individual discussions with landowners;
- Organisation of the public hearing about the 1st draft of the management plan;
- Updating of the plans based on results of public hearing;
- Submission of the 2nd draft of the plan to local authorities for approval;
- Making revisions in the plans based on proposals of the local authorities, if needed and if acceptable with respect to legal requirements and objectives of the plan.
- Organisation of the final supervisory board meeting;
- Inserting of last revisions and submission of the final version of the plan to Nature Conservation Board;
- Approval of the plan by the Minister of Environment;
- Multiplication of the plan for the key-stakeholders (13-16 copies for each plan).

All the management plans were prepared in Latvian language, but on the request of the project steering group an English version was developed for management plan of Nature Park “The Salaca River valley” stretch *Mazsalaca-Staicele*. A summary of 4 management plans for the Salaca River valley was prepared (in Latvian language) to give an overview about the whole territory and its management requirements.

2.1.1 Development of the management plan for Nature Reserve “Randu Meadows”

Brief overview of the territory:

- Nature reserve “Randu meadows” is Natura 2000 site including complex of coastal habitats with total area of 285 ha, stretching along the coastline between Ainaži and Salacgrīva (see map in **Annex 1**). Area contains habitat types of European importance like Boreal Baltic coastal meadows (1630*) and coastal lagoons (1150*), hosting several important protected plant, invertebrate and amphibian species and it is also important nesting, breeding and resting site for wide range of bird species.
- The main problem in the area is overgrowing of the coastal habitats by reeds, due to giving up of management activities like grazing and mowing.
- The main interest of Ainaži municipally is development of tourism and recreation by improving of tourism infrastructure and creating of beach, which so far has not been possible due to the strict requirements within the territory of nature reserve.

Process of the development of plan:

- Elaboration of the management plan started in June 2003 and was finalised in May 2004, while approval procedure was continuing until the end of the project.
- Main conflicts during development of the plan were related to establishment of the tourism infrastructure in the territory of Ainaži municipality (camping site, parking lot and improvement of the beach for the needs of recreation). Proposed infrastructure was potentially creating threats for the nature values of the territory – coastal meadows, grey dunes and spawning grounds of natterjack (*Bufo calamita*). After several discussions a compromise between nature conservation interests represented by administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve and Life-Nature project on “Protection and management of the coastal Habitats in Latvia” and development interests represented by Ainaži City Council was achieved during the 3rd Supervisory Board meeting.
- Approval procedure of the plan by municipalities has been long and complicated: in the beginning of June 2004 plans were submitted to Ainaži and Salacgrīva municipalities. Ainaži City Council first rejected the plan asking to do slight modification in the zoning of territory. After consultations with experts requested modifications was inserted in the plan and Ainaži City Council approved it on 11 August 2004. Salacgrīva City Council rejected the plan twice during the summer 2004, asking administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve to sign agreements with all landowners concerning changes of borders of the nature reserve. In summer 2005 plan was again submitted to Salacgrīva City Council and again rejected, asking to do changes with regard to zoning with in two land properties. After carrying out of additional field survey with involvement of experts one proposal on increase of neutral zone in harbour territory was supported and changes included in the plan, but second proposal on defining the neutral zone within a private property was rejected, because planned construction works at this location would cause destruction of habitats and be against national and EU nature conservation requirements. Finally the plan was submitted to the Nature Conservation Board without accept of Salacgrīva City Council.

The main management goals and activities included in the management plan for Nature Reserve Randu meadows”:

- Management of coastal habitats with aim to create favourable conservation status for important protected species and habitats found in the area, including following activities:
 - ⇒ Cutting of trees and bushes, removing of reeds and building of fences for grazing in the areas defined in the plan as well as starting of continuous management of the areas.
 - ⇒ Regular mowing and grazing of the territory.
 - ⇒ Creating of nesting sites for Artic tern by cleaning from vegetation existing islets as well as making artificial ones;
 - ⇒ Cleaning of ditches to avoid bogging up of the meadows.

- Improvement of infrastructure for tourism and recreation, including:
 - ⇒ Creating of beach, which fulfils the requirements for recreation as well as nature conservation objectives;
 - ⇒ Establishing of footpaths and observation towers/platforms.
- Increasing public awareness and information, including:
 - ⇒ Establishing of info-stands and signs.
- Establishing of co-operation between the landowners, municipalities and administration of the NBR to support the implementation of the management plan.

2.1.2 Development of the management plans for Nature Park “The Salaca River valley”

Brief overview about the territory:

- Nature park “Salaca river valley” is Natura 2000 territory, stretching as a narrow belt along the Salaca river starting from Mazsalaca till Salacgrīva with the total area of 6307 ha. The park comprises important nature values as well as outstanding landscape and cultural historic values. Salaca is also the 4th biggest salmon spawning river in the Baltic Sea area.
- As the most important nature values in the park are regarded following: fast flows of the river Salaca (3260), hosting as well several fish and invertebrate species of European importance; siliceous rocky slopes of the river valley (8220); alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (91E0*); riparian mixed forests (91F0); as well as several grassland habitat types, like semi-natural dry grasslands (6210), species-rich *Nardus* grasslands (6230*) and Fennoscandian lowland species-rich dry to mesic grasslands. Park is hosting also several protected species of Community importance, e.g. salmon (*Salmo salar*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), thick shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), otter (*Lutra lutra*) and pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*), which are quite common here. There has been found also a small population of the hermit beetle (*Osmoderma eremita*).
- One of the most important tasks of the management plan is to find compromise between conservation of the nature and landscape values as well as to provide possibilities for sustainable development in the area, e.g. tourism development. The main actions of the plan were targeted toward limitation of the overgrowing of water habitat, management of semi-natural meadows, protection of forest habitats, removal of obstruction to fish migration (within the stretch “Mazsalaca-Staicele”) as well as development of sufficient tourism infrastructure to limit negative impact of tourism pressure to vulnerable habitats and species.

Process of the development of plans:

Stretch “Rozēni – Mērnīki”:

- Elaboration of the plan started in June 2003 and was finalised in May 2004.
- During development of the plan very good contacts with landowners of the territory were established – meetings with landowners were very well attended as well as several individual discussions were carried out. As result there were no big objects from the side of landowners towards proposed management actions.
- The management plan has been approved by the both concerned municipalities – in Ainaži on 14 July 2004 and in Staicele on 14 September 2004. The final supervisory board meeting was held on 29 October 2004, where few technical revisions were proposed to be inserted in the final version of the plan. After inserting the final amendments the plan was submitted to the Nature Conservation Board.
- The plan was approved by the Minister of Environment on 14 January 2005.

Stretch “Mazsalaca-Staicele”:

- Elaboration of the plan started in June 2004 and was finalised in May 2005.
- The same approach in communication and co-operation with landowners was followed as for the stretch “Rozēni – Mērnīki”. All meetings with landowners were relatively well attended. During these

meetings as well as at the final public hearing landowners gave several proposals on management activities and potential tourism infrastructure.

- The management plan was submitted to concerned municipalities – Mazslaca, Skanķalne, Ramata and Staicele in the beginning of June 2005 and were approved by all of them until 21 July 2005. The final supervisory board meeting was held on 28 July 2005, where still some remarks have been made on potential impacts of proposed tourism infrastructure on vulnerable species, therefore clarifications with experts were needed to finalise the plan. Final version of the plan was submitted to Nature Conservation Board at the end of the project.

Stretch “Salacgrīva”:

- Elaboration of the plan started in June 2004 and was finalised in May 2005. It was carried out in parallel to the development of the plan for stretch “Mazsalaca-Staicele”. Also most of the meetings were organised back to back or jointly.
- The same approach in communication and co-operation with landowners was followed as for the stretch “Rozēni – Mērnīki”. All meetings with landowners were relatively well attended. During these meetings as well as at the final public hearing landowners gave several proposals on management activities and potential tourism infrastructure.
- The management plan was submitted to Salacgrīva municipality in the beginning of June 2005 and already at 15 June it was approved by the City Council. The final supervisory board meeting was held on 28 July 2005. Final version of the plan was submitted to Nature Conservation Board at the end of the project together with other plans.

Stretch “Staicele -Rozēni”:

- Elaboration of the plan started in June 2005 and was finalised in beginning of September 2005.
- First draft of the management plan for this stretch of the Salaca River valley was developed already in 2003 by experts of UNDP/GEF project on “Protection of Biodiversity in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve (NVBR)”. However the administration of the NVBR has asked BEF to revise the plan bringing it into consistence with the management plans for other stretches of the Salaca River valley. This required additional field surveys on grassland and forest habitats and tourism infrastructure as well as considerable job on description of management activities. BANAT-MP project had to organise also the last two supervisory board meetings and public hearing.
- The management plan was submitted to Staicele municipality in the beginning of September 2005, but was not approved by the City Council due to objections with regard to zoning. The final supervisory board meeting was held on 30 September 2005. Since the proposal of Staicele municipality to remove strict regime zone in Rozēni was rejected by experts, the final version of the plan was submitted to Nature Conservation Board without accept from Staicele municipality.

The main management goals and activities included in the management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”

- Management of nature conservation values of the territory, following the nature conservation requirements, including:
 - ⇒ Prevention of the overgrowth of the riffle/rapid areas of the river by removing aquatic vegetation;
 - ⇒ Removal of obstruction to the fish migration to the upper reaches of the Salaca (in stretch Mazsalaca-Staicele);
 - ⇒ Investigations on distribution of particular invertebrate species and implementation of measures for their protection;
 - ⇒ Maintenance of biologically valuable meadows;
 - ⇒ Restriction of timber cutting activities within biologically valuable forest habitats on slopes of the river valley.
- Protection and improvement of the territories’ landscape and cultural historical values, including:
 - ⇒ Maintenance of open landscape in the areas of high landscape values;
 - ⇒ Cutting bushes around outstanding old trees or siliceous rocky slopes;

- Improvement of infrastructure for tourism and recreation, including:
 - ⇒ Investigations on ecological capacity of the nature park and permissible number of tourists;
 - ⇒ Development of the rules for controlling the number of tourists and using the camping sites;
 - ⇒ Improvement and maintenance of the tourism infrastructure at the camping sites and other places frequently visited by tourists;
 - ⇒ Preparation of project on footpaths within the territory of the nature park.
- Increasing public awareness and information, including:
 - ⇒ Setting up info-stands and signs.
- Establishing co-operation between the landowners, municipalities and administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve to support the implementation of the management plan.

2.1.3 Events organised to support preparation of the management plans

During the whole project period there were organised 37 events related to development of the management plans. It includes 16 supervisory board meetings, 9 expert meetings and 12 public events: 4 informative meetings for the local stakeholders, 3 intermediate informative meetings for landowners, 5 public hearings (see reports and participant lists from the main events in **Annex 3**).

At the **supervisory board meetings** the representatives of key-stakeholders were introduced with the status of development of the management plans. The proposed management actions and zoning of the territory were discussed at the meetings and recommendations of the supervisory board taken into account for development of the plan. At the final supervisory board meetings a protocol was signed, stating that elaboration of the plan has followed all the legal procedures and requirements as defined in Order of the Minister No.120 "On recommendations for elaboration of the Nature management plans". In each meeting 10-15 members of the supervisory board were present.

Expert meetings were organised to exchange information about the main nature values at the territory, to define priorities and to discuss the management and protection goals and needed management activities. During these events also the individual protection rules for the territories were discussed involving also experts from Ministry of Environment and Nature Conservation Board. In each meeting 5-10 experts were present.

Public events were organised to insure public participation in the management planning of the protected areas as well as to raise awareness about nature values and management needs of the particular protected areas and Natura 2000 in general. Information about the public events was sent to key stakeholders and each landowner by mail as well as published in local newspapers. Ca. 250 participants in total attended the public events (ca. 20-40 participants per event).

Informative meetings for the local stakeholders were organised at the beginning of development of each plan, involving representatives from local authorities, administration of NVBR, concerned state institutions, landowners and other interested parties. At the meetings overview about the process of management plan development was introduced and proposals on needed management actions were collected.

Intermediate informative meetings for landowners are not requested by the official procedure for management plan development in Latvia, but were organised for the three territories to insure better co-operation with landowners and to receive their comments on first drafts of the management actions. Together with invitations to these meetings landowners received questionnaires where information was asked about their expectations with regard to development of the protected territory, current and planned management of their property as well as suggestions regarding management plan. Received information from questionnaires as well as from the meetings was used for development of the management plan.

Public hearings were organised when the first draft of the management plans was ready. Management plans were submitted two weeks before the public hearing event to the local authorities, where landowners could

read them and study the maps. Additionally, attached to invitations, each landowner received a map with his/her property and surrounding area, where the planned management actions and tourism infrastructure as well as zoning was reflected. At the public hearing events prepared draft of the management plan was introduced and all proposals or objections collected and included as annex to the plan. Furthermore proposals were integrated into the plan, except those which would be against the legal requirements or management goals of the territory.

In parallel to the listed events several individual meetings or telephone conversations with landowners were carried out, explaining the nature conservation and management requirements, giving recommendations on particular situations as well as receiving proposals on particular management activities.

Management plans for Nature Reserve “Randu meadows”

For development of the management plan following events were organized:

- Info-meeting for the stakeholders about the preparation of the management plan 20.06.03, Salacgrīva;
- 1st Expert meeting on nature conservation values of the territory, 24.09.03, Riga;
- 1st Supervisory board meetings, 30.09.03, Rozēni
- 2nd Expert meeting on conservation goals and management activities, 04.12.03, Riga
- 2nd Supervisory board meeting, 15.01.04, Rozēni
- 3rd Expert meeting on management activities, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- 3rd Supervisory board meeting, 12.03.2004, Rozēni
- Public hearing, 15.04.2004, Salacgrīva
- Final Supervisory board meeting, 30.09.2005, Rozēni

Management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”, stretch Rozēni - Mērnīki

For development of the management plan following events were organized:

- Info-meeting for the stakeholders about the preparation of the management plan 20.06.03, Salacgrīva;
- 1st Expert meeting on nature conservation values of the territory, 24.09.03, Riga;
- 1st Supervisory board meeting, 30.09.03, Rozēni
- 2nd Expert meeting on conservation goals and management activities, 04.12.03, Riga
- Meeting with landowners of the territory, 09.12.03, Mērnīki
- 2nd Supervisory board meeting, 15.01.04, Rozēni
- 3rd Expert meeting on management activities, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- 3rd Supervisory board meeting, 12.03.2004, Rozēni
- Public hearing, 14.04.2004, Rozēni
- Final Supervisory board meeting, 29.10.2004, Rozēni

Management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”, stretch Mazsalaca - Staicele

For development of the management plan following events were organized:

- Info-meeting for the stakeholders about the preparation of the management plan, 17.09.2004, Staicele;
- 1st Expert meeting on nature conservation values, management goals and activities, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- 1st Supervisory board meeting, 20.12.04, Rozēni
- 2nd Expert meeting on zoning and management activities, 19.01.05, Riga
- Meeting with landowners of the territory, 01.02.05, Mazsalaca
- 2nd Supervisory board meeting, 11.04.05, Mazsalaca
- 3rd Expert meeting on individual rules for Salaca river valley, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- Public hearing, 13.05.2005, Rozēni
- Final Supervisory board meeting, 30.09.05, Rozēni

Management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”, stretch Salacgrīva

For development of the management plan following events were organized:

- Info-meeting for the stakeholders about the preparation of the management plan, 17.09.2004, Salacgrīva;
- 1st Expert meeting on nature conservation values, management goals and activities, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- 1st Supervisory board meeting, 20.12.04, Rozēni
- 2nd Expert meeting on zoning and management activities, 19.01.05, Riga
- Meeting with landowners of the territory, 01.02.05, Mazsalaca
- 2nd Supervisory board meeting, 11.04.05, Mazsalaca
- 3rd Expert meeting on individual rules for Salaca river valley, 04-05.02.2004, Riga
- Public hearing ,14.05.2005, Salacgrīva
- Final Supervisory board meeting, 30.09.05, Rozēni

Management plans for Nature Park “Salaca river valley”, stretch Staicele-Rozēni

For development of the management plan following events were organized:

- 2nd Supervisory board meeting, 20.12.04, Rozēni
- Public hearing ,14.05.2005, Salacgrīva
- Final Supervisory board meeting, 30.09.05, Rozēni

2.2 Development of project on implementation of the management plans for Nature park “Salaca River Valley” applied to LIFE-Nature programme

To guarantee implementation of the principal actions defined in the management plans of the Nature Park “Salaca River Valley” and to attract the necessary financing and project application to LIFE-Nature programme was developed, including detailed implementation plan of the actions to be carried out in the territory of the Nature Park.

Outcomes of the action:

- A project application on “Management of the Natura 2000 site “Salaca river valley”” was submitted to European Commission in autumn 2004.
- The project covered following sets of actions:
 - habitat restoration (removal of obstruction to fish migration, restoration of aquatic habitats, biologically valuable grasslands and forest habitats);
 - ensuring sustainable use of the recreational resources of the Salaca River (survey and analyses of recreational pressure; establishment of nature friendly tourism infrastructure);
 - public awareness (informative seminars on best practices in management of the river, valley, publications, info-stands, information in mass media);
 - strengthening co-operation among stakeholders (regular co-ordination meetings).
- Project applicant was “Baltijas Vides forums” (BEF Latvia); project involved 12 partners, including administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve, 6 Local Authorities, Latvian Fish Resources Agency; Vidzeme University College, JSC “Latvijas Valsts meži” (Latvian State Forests) and 2 Biosphere reserves from Germany.
- The total project budget was 1 389 074 EURO.

However, the project was not granted, because of following reasons given by European Commission:

- Main project activities were not targeted on the priority species and habitats;
- The project site is not considered as EU importance as the habitats are relatively common elsewhere;

- Indicated threats are not of an urgent nature. As most pressing is recognised the improvement of migration root for salmon, but its population is evaluated as relatively healthy;
- The root cause of the main threats – pollution and resulting eutrophication is not addressed by the project actions.

At the last project steering group meeting potential solutions how to use the prepared application and guarantee implementation of the foreseen actions were discussed:

- It was agreed that repeated submission of the reviewed application in the next year to the LIFE- Nature programme would not be appropriate, because of rejections reasons given by the EC.
- The habitat management component could be integrated in the INTTEREG III A application developed by the administration of North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve together with Estonian colleagues.
- With regard to tourism infrastructure development a project application shall be developed for the next round of ERAF projects, jointly by all municipalities around Salaca and administration of the NVBR. However, it is not clear, if administration of the NVBR has enough capacity for project development and co-ordination, therefore other lead party shall be considered.

2.3 Capacity building

The capacity building component was integrated in the project to support nature conservation administrations and NGOs involved in preparation and implementation of the management plans for protected territories. The focus of these capacity building activities was on public involvement and socio-economic aspects within management of Natura 2000 sites. They include 1 training course on organisation of public hearings as well as more complex training programme on socio-economic aspects (consisting of two trainings, development of the manual on evaluation of the Natura 2000 sites in economic terms as well as the case-study on cost benefit-analysis).

Training course on organisation and leading of public hearings, 29-31.10.03, Rozēni:

Trainer: Jan Gittinger, Contract KG, Germany

Trainees: Representatives from Nature Conservation Board, administrations of protected areas and BEF (11 persons)

The main goals of the training course were:

- To get an understanding how to embed the hearing into the planning process;
- To learn tools of organising a public hearing;
- To learn tools for leading discussion processes during a hearing.

The training was targeted for the people involved in preparation of management plans and organisation of the public hearings for the management plans. The content of the training was designed based on requirements of national legislation and using the example of management plan for Randu meadows. The training included lectures, group working, role games and self-reflection.

The participants evaluated the training very positively. It gave very practical information on procedure and methods for organizing of public hearings as well as theoretical background and hints for leading of discussion and handling of difficult situations.

Training programme on socio-economic aspects within management of Natura 2000 sites:

Trainers: Markus Leibenath, Leibniz – Institute for Ecologic and Regional Development, Germany and Marianne Badura blue! Germany

Trainees: Nature conservation experts from Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation Board, NGOs, as well as representatives from administrations of protected areas and State JSC “Latvijas meži”.

1st training on “Evaluation of nature in economic terms”, 21-23.01.04, Sigulda

The main goals of the training course were:

- To define possibilities for income and economic development within protected areas;
- To learn about methods for estimation of economic development possibilities of Natura 2000 sites and monetary value of nature conservation;
- To practise economic evaluation of protected areas based on particular examples.

The training included theoretical lectures on possible economic activities in protected territories and methodologies for estimation of costs and incomes, case studies from Germany as well as practical exercise, based on examples of two potential Natura 2000 sites in Latvia - Randu meadows and Salaca river valley.

The participants acknowledged that training has provided good overview on all possible costs and benefits, as well as showed what data would be needed to carry out proper estimations. However, participants expressed interested to receive deeper information about particular methods for estimation of non-consumptive benefits of nature conservation (e.g. clean water and air, green grass, etc.).

2nd training on “Economic evaluation of protected territories”, 21-23.04.04, Sigulda

The main goals of the training course were:

- To provide deeper look in cost-benefit analyses of protected areas;
- To get an overview on classification and selection of evaluation methods for cost-benefit analyses;
- To learn how to conduct in practice the most popular evaluation methods.

The training included theoretical lectures on systematisation of valuation methods, detailed examples of few most popular methods as well as practical exercise, where application of valuation methods was analysed, using as examples the home work cases of participants.

Participants admitted that training gave an overview on complexity of the issue and level of expertise needed for carrying out appropriate cost-benefit analysis. It was also stated that cost-benefit analyses for protected territories is very perspective field and actual at the moment when nature conservation interests are often confronted with potential development interests (particularly concerning establishment of Natura 2000 network).

Manual on “Evaluation of Natura 2000 sites in economic terms”

The first draft of the manual was prepared as a background material for the 2nd training course on “Economic evaluation of protected territories”, held in March 2004 in Sigulda. The manual included introduction about the cost-benefit analysis and its application for evaluation of protected areas, overview about the main methods used for cost-benefit analysis and more detailed description of the most popular methods.

During year 2005 the manual was updated, improving its structure and provided information. The text of manual was translated into Latvian language and prepared for publishing. The Latvian version was published in printing house at the end of project. Additionally “pdf” file with the English version was developed to be published on INTERNET and distributed in CD format.

The manual is targeted to nature conservation authorities interested at cost-benefit analysis of protected territories. However it is not aiming to enable the nature conservation experts to carry out the cost-benefit analysis by themselves. Instead, the objective is to allow the staff members of nature conservation

authorities to prepare terms of reference for such study and become competent partners of economists who will finally carry it out. The manual helps to understand the possibilities of the cost-benefit analysis and its limitations as well as to define the needs for economic information and the most appropriate method to obtain it.

Case study on cost-benefit analysis for removal of obstruction to fish migration in Salaca

Following the request of the project steering group a case study on cost-benefit analysis, based on example of the Salaca river valley was developed by the German trainers – Dr. Markus Leibenath and Ms. Marianne Badura. Since the project budget was not sufficient to carry out the full cost-benefit analysis, including comprehensive surveys and analysis of data, the German experts developed Terms of Reference for such study, including background information about the particular case to be analysed, selection and description of the most appropriate method (Contingent Valuation) and calculation of the necessary human resources for implementation of the cost-benefit analysis.

For development of the case study following actions were carried out:

- One week of site visits in Latvia (May 2005) to discuss with interested parties potential subject of the case study – meetings were organised with Nature Conservation Board, Latvian Fund for Nature, administration of the North Vidzeme biosphere Reserve, Salacgrīva Tourism Information Centre and Vidzeme University College. Several options for the case study were presented, including:
 - Alternative 1: Costs and benefits for landowners of the whole Salaca River valley related to habitat management;
 - Alternative 2: Costs and benefits related to tourism development at the regional level;
 - Alternative 3: Costs and benefits at national level for nature conservation in the Salaca river valley
 - Alternative 4: Costs and benefits at national level related to removal of Staicele dam (obstruction for fish migration) and restoration of the salmon spawning sites.

During discussions with administration of the North Vidzeme biosphere Reserve the alternative No. 4 was selected, as the most concrete project which has to be implemented at the nearest time and includes actual decision making problem – national government shall adopt the legal act on expropriation of the dam for its removal.

- Presentation of the ToRs for the cost-benefit analysis to the administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve (held on 12 September, 2005 in Riga). The presented ToRs and described methodology was highly evaluated by the representatives of the administration, however it was not clear, if the Biosphere Reserve will be able to allocate the resources for implementation of the study.
- Updating of the case-study based on comments received from administration of the Biosphere Reserve. The final version of the case-study was included as annex to the manual on “Evaluation of Natura 2000 sites in economic terms”.

2.4 Project supervision

For supervision of the project a project steering group was established, involving representatives from Latvian Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation Board, administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve, Latvian Fund for Nature and German Federal Nature Conservation Agency. At these meetings project team reported on project implementation and spending of the budget as well as the next project activities, needed changes in the programme or project budget were discussed.

Five steering group meetings have been organised during the project implementation:

- 1st Steering Group meeting, 12.05.03, Riga – introduction of the project and modification of its objectives based on actual situation and needs in the country.
- 2nd Steering Group meeting, 15.12.03, Riga – defining the concrete tasks for the second project year, including development of management plans for whole Salaca river valley.

- 3rd Steering Group meeting, 07.06.2004, *Salacgrīva* – agreement on prolongation of the project and defining the tasks for prolongation phase.
- 4th Steering Group meeting, 27.01.2005, *Rīga* – discussion on practical details with regard to amending of the management plan for stretch *Staicele – Rozēni* and development of the case-study on cost-benefit analysis.
- 5th Steering Group meeting, 05.01.2005, *Rīga* – final reporting on project implementation and discussion on future perspectives for continuation of the project activities.

3. Evaluation of the project implementation

Implementation of the set objectives:

- Management plans developed for 5 territories (Nature reserve “Randu meadows” and 4 stretches of Nature Park “Salaca river valley”), instead of 4 management plans initially planned by the project, as well as summary prepared covering 4 stretches of the Salaca River valley.
- Increased awareness of local inhabitants about nature conservation issues and Natura 2000 through public information activities held by the project in “Randu meadows” and “Salaca River valley”: 12 public information events organised, which have been attended by ca. 250 participants in total.
- Developed project on implementation of the management plans for the Nature Park “Salaca River valley”: LIFE-Nature project prepared (budget 1 389 074 EUR; 12 partners), but not approved by European Commission because the project site was not recognised as top priority for EC (the habitats, presented there, are relatively common elsewhere and the main project activities are not targeted on the priority species and habitats).
- Socio-economic aspects in management of Natura 2000 sites were analysed through elaboration of the management plans and case study on “Cost-benefit analyses for removal of obstruction to fish migration in Salaca”.
- Capacity and knowledge of nature conservation authorities and experts increased through participation in the training courses on public hearings and economic evaluation of the protected territories: 3 training courses organised with (attended by 56 participants in total) and manual on evaluation of protected areas in economic terms prepared, giving overview on potentials and limitations for economic evaluation of protected territories as well as in-depth review of the main methods of cost-benefit analysis.

General evaluation on project results:

- BEF has gained very good experience in management plan development and involvement of public in discussions on management of protected areas;
- Through development of the management plans and public involvement activities the basis for fund raising and further management of Randu meadows and Salaca River Valley has been prepared.
- Good overview gained on socio-economic aspects of management of Natura 2000 sites;
- Baltic experts have gained good experience and knowledge through participation in project actions.

4. Future perspectives

To guarantee full implementation of the management plans developed by the project, additional fund raising activities shall be carried out, particularly with regard to Salaca River Valley. Partly the management actions defined in the management plans will be carried out on the costs of local authorities, private landowners and administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve. Restoration of the river habitats and removal of obstruction to fish migration in Staicele is planned to be implemented through UNDP/GEF project on “Protection of biodiversity in the North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve”. However, available resources are not

sufficient to complete all the actions as defined in the management plans. Substantial loss for the territory is not granted LIFE-NATRE project, which would cover the gap.

Potential options for the how to use the prepared LIFE application were discussed at the last project steering group meeting:

- Habitat management actions described in the LIFE application shall be modified and included in INTERREG III A application, which is prepared by administration of the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve together with Estonian partners for wetland project.
- The component of tourism infrastructure could be used for development of ERAF project involving all municipalities around Salaca and North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve. Administration of the Biosphere Reserve shall evaluate, if they have enough capacity for co-ordination of such project.

Taking into account the gained experience and knowledge about the territory BEF could be interested to participate in development and implementation of such projects as partner.

Possibilities to implement of the study on cost-benefit analysis for removal of the obstruction to fish migration shall be considered by administration of North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve and UNDP/GEF project on "Protection of biodiversity in the North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve".

5. Finances

The BANAT-MP project was financed by the two donors – German Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety and Latvian Environmental Protection Fund (see below table reflecting project incomes).

Donor	Income (EURO)	Date of receiving
<i>UBA - Germany</i>		
1st rate	50 000.00	11.07.2003
2nd rate	60 000.00	31.03.2004
3rd rate	25 000.00	20.04.2005
4th rate	25 000.00	12.08.2005
total by donor	160 000.00	
<i>Latvian EPF</i>		
1st rate	3 113.33	15.11.2003
2nd rate	8 955.22	29.09.2004
3rd rate	2 845.74	18.05.2005
4th rate	2 845.74	19.08.2005
total by donor	17 760.03	
TOTAL received	177 760.03	

The Latvian contribution initially was agreed on 20 000 EURO (12 000 LVL), as defined in the project contract between German Federal Environmental Agency, Latvian Ministry of Environment and Baltic Environmental Forum. However, since in the contracts with Latvian Environmental Protection Fund the sum was indicated in LVL, the actual contribution of Latvian Environmental Protection Fund due to exchange rates was for 2240 EURO less.

The revisions and spending of the project budget is reflected in the table below:

Position	planned budget	revised budget due to prolongation	revised budget by actual incomes	spent total	realisation %
A BEF Team	34 000.00	48 900.00	48 900.00	47 864.99	97.88
B External LAT Experts	20 000.00	23 300.00	23 300.00	23 378.92	100.34
C Western Experts	43 000.00	42 850.00	42 850.00	43 820.00	102.26
D Travel	22 700.00	11 800.00	9 560.03	8 418.31	88.06
E Workshops	21 000.00	11 300.00	11 300.00	12 199.46	107.96
F Translations	4 500.00	5 600.00	5 600.00	5 532.39	98.79
G Printing	6 400.00	8 650.00	8 650.00	9 458.38	109.35
H Office Materials/bank fees	4 800.00	3 700.00	3 700.00	3 517.21	95.06
I Telecommunication	9 600.00	8 400.00	8 400.00	8 070.37	96.08
K Overheads	14 000.00	15 500.00	15 500.00	15 500.00	100.00
Total:	180 000.00	180 000.00	177 760.03	177 760.03	100.00

The full balance including budget spending according the accounting periods as well as the detailed accounting see attached in **Annex 4**.

Revisions in the project budget:

First project budget was revised in summer 2004 based on agreements in the project Steering group meeting on 07.06.2004. Revisions in the project budget were made due to the following changes in the programme of the project:

- Prolongation of the project until 30 September 2005 (including updating of the management plan for the stretch *Staicele – Rozēni* and development of the summary of management plans for the four stretches of the Salaca River);
- Withdrawing of the last training courses on socio-economic aspects and replacing them with preparation of a case study on cost-benefit analyses for Salaca Nature Park;
- Publication of the training manual and the case study.

As a result the following positions have been upgraded: A – BEF team (honorarys for the prolongation phase); B - External LAT Experts (field studies for the stretch *Staicele - Rozēni*); F – Translations (translations of the case study); G- Printing (publication of the manual and case-study).

The following positions have been reduced due to withdrawing of the last training courses: D- Travel; E- Workshops; H – Office materials and I – Telecommunication.

Second revisions in the project budget were made at the end of the project according to actual incomes. The missing income was subtracted from the travel budget, since this budget position was not used to full extent due to much cheaper flight tickets of German experts.

Explanation of the spending:

All the received income was spent by the end of the project, including additionally agreed prolongation until 31 October 2005 for finalisation of the project (i.e. submission of the management plans).

Few budget positions were overspent (less than 10 %):

- E: Workshop – few additional meetings had to be organised with regard to development of management plans.

- G: Printing – costs for multiplication of the management plans were higher than expected, since one of the management plans (for stretch Mazsalaca-Staicele) included enormous amount of coloured maps due to the size of the territory.

Report by Anda Ruskule