



LIFE Project Number

**LIFE13 NAT/CY/000176**

**FINAL Report**

**Covering the project activities from 01/10/2014 to 31/12/2017**

Reporting Date

**<31/03/2018>**

**LIFE-FORBIRDS: Improving lowland forests habitats for birds  
in Cyprus**

Project Data

<b>Project location</b>	Multiple (CY6000009, CY6000007, CY3000005)
<b>Project start date:</b>	01/10/2014
<b>Project end date:</b>	31/12/2017 <b>Extension date:</b> -
<b>Total Project duration (in months)</b>	40 months <b>Extension months:</b> -
<b>Total budget</b>	€ 978.718
<b>Total eligible budget</b>	€ 978.718
<b>EU contribution:</b>	€ 489.359
<b>(%) of total costs</b>	50%
<b>(%) of eligible costs</b>	50%

Beneficiary Data

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## List of abbreviations

ABs: Associated Beneficiaries  
AsPM: Assistant Project Manager  
CB: Coordinating Beneficiary  
CCo: Consultation Committee  
CE: Communication Expert  
CFA: Cyprus Forest Association  
CYBC: Cyprus Broadcasting Cooperation  
DE: Department of Environment  
DF: Department of Forests  
EC: European Commission  
EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment  
EMT: External Monitoring Team  
FCS: Favourable Conservation Status  
FR: Final Report  
FRV: Favourable Reference Value  
FU: Frederick University  
GFS: Game and Fauna service  
IAS: Invasive Alien Species  
IR: Inception Report  
MR: Mid-Term Report  
NGOs: Non-governmental organisations  
PFM: Project Financial Manager (referred as Accounting Officer in the project proposal)  
PMT: Project Management Team  
PrCo: Project Coordinator  
SCo: Scientific Committee  
SPA: Special Protection Area  
TAF: Traditional Agricultural Field  
TVs: Target Values  
WDD: Water Development Department

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## 2. Executive Summary

The project LIFE-FORBIRDS: Improving lowland forest habitats for birds in Cyprus (reference code: LIFE13 NAT/CY/000176), was implemented within the framework of the LIFE+13 call, and had three major objectives: a) to implement conservation / management measures that will substantially improve ecological conditions for selected bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive occurring in the Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Kavro Gkreko (CY3000005), Koshi – Pallourokampos (CY6000009) and Stavrovouni – Potamos Panagias Stazousas (CY6000007), b) through the implementation of these pilot conservation management measures to demonstrate to the Cypriot foresters and other stakeholders, the benefits of adopting a more holistic forest management approach that will address the needs of birds dwelling in or visiting the forest, and c) to contribute towards, enhancement of public awareness on the need to conserve wild birds and combating bird crime within the broader project area. The project started in October 2014 and was successfully completed on 31/12/2017. The total project budget was €978.718, of which €489.359 (50.00% of total eligible budget) was funded by the European Commission's (EC), LIFE+13 programme.

Two reports preceded the present document, namely the Inception Report (IR) of the project (delivered to the EC on 30/06/2015), describing in detail the project's progress for the first 8 months, and the Mid-Term Report (MR) of the project with payment request, covering the reporting period of 01/10/2014 (beginning of project) to 31/08/2016, and delivered to the EC on 15/10/2016. The present report consists the Final Report (FR) of the project. It analytically presents the progress achieved by each individual action of the project and focuses on its managerial, technical and financial parameters. Attached to the FR are also the comments on the response letters of the EC, requested to be delivered with the present report (**Annex 7.1.1: Letters from the Commission and Response to the Comments**). As indicated in the response letter after the IR submission [Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015], it should be noted here that parts of this report, as well as of the MR & IR of this project, are based on the corresponding outputs of both LIFE10 NAT/CY/000717 (JUNIPERCY) and LIFE12 NAT/CY/000758 (LIFE-RIZOELIA) projects.

Generally, the project was implemented successfully without substantial divergences from the initial proposal, despite some delays in A, C and E actions which were resolved through appropriate management corrective actions. Some of the changes/delays resulted in some insignificant differentiations in the budget as described in chapter 6 of this report, without however affecting the project's implementation or overall budget.

The project developed and practised an explicit managerial system in order to ensure the effective administrative, scientific and financial coordination and proper implementation of its schedule. The **Project Management Team (PMT)**, comprised by beneficiary representatives, ensured the efficient management of the project at the administrative level, according to the 'Project Management Guidelines' (see: IR: Annex 7.2.4). Additionally, the 'Project Financial Management Guide' (see IR: Annex 7.5.5) prepared by the **Project Financial Manager (PFM)** of the project, contributed to the sound handling of the project's financials. The operation of the PMT, having the advice of the **Scientific Committee (SCo)**, ensured the effective cooperation among all beneficiaries for the successful implementation of the project. In total, four SCo meetings took place (19/03/2015, 26/11/2015, 14/04/16, 05/04/2017) (See this report #4.1).

For the project's implementation five major groups of activities were carried out: Preparatory (Actions A), Conservation (Actions C), Monitoring (Actions D), Dissemination (Actions E) and Management (Actions F).

- The Preparatory Actions (three in total: A.1-A.3) were fundamental for collating the necessary scientific information for the initiation and the implementation of the project. They all concluded successfully, with a small delay noted in a deliverable of A.2; i.e. the “**Approved management plan for Koshi site**”, due to additional information that needed to be included (see #5.1.2). All in all, the course of this deliverable did not hinder the rest of the project actions. The outcomes of the Preparatory Actions achieved can be summarized as follows:

- A composite technical report with the specifications of the implemented concrete conservation actions interventions – A.1
- Three maps illustrating the locations of the aforesaid interventions – A.1
- Two maps with the distribution of invasive and alien plant species for Koshi - Pallourokampas and Kavo Gkreko SPAs – A.1
- A technical study for the constructed weir at Avdellero site (Koshi - Pallourokampas SPA) – A.1
- A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study for the above weir construction and two preliminary EIAs for the creation of the five Traditional Agricultural Fields (TAFs) and the creation of cereal-legume fields at the three project SPAs respectively – A.1
- The preparation of a draft management plan for Koshi - Pallourokampas SPA – A.2
- The delivery of an approved management plan for Koshi - Pallourokampas SPA – A.2
- A technical report on the population size assessment of the targeted bird species of the project, including their Favorable Reference Values (FRVs) – A.3

- The Concrete Conservation Actions (four in total: C.1-C.4) were the project's core actions that contributed towards achieving its goals. All four were carried out until the end of the project and their timely implementation followed the 'Project's Progress Monitoring Protocol' (See *IR Annex: 7.2.5*). All deliverables and milestones were reached successfully, and the outcomes of the Conservation Actions are:

- The creation of five TAFs within the three project SPAs – C.1
- Installation of 4 water tanks, 5 water ponds and bird feeders for the TAFs – C.1
- The installation of 200 artificial nests, dispersed throughout the three project SPAs – C.2
- The establishment of 17 watering points, dispersed throughout the three project SPAs – C.2
- The creation of 12 cereal-legume fields for providing pesticide free food to the birds of the project SPAs – C.2
- Construction of 15 dry stone walls of 399 total running meters, at the boundaries of the TAFs, as well as next to selected cereal-legume fields – C.2
- Construction of two water collecting aprons to be installed at Koshi - Palourokampas SPA – C.2
- Construction of a small weir in Avdellero area (Koshi – Pallourokampas SPA) – C.2
- Removal of alien/exotic plant species at Kavo Greko and Koshi - Pallourokampas SPA – C.3
- Restoration of native habitat types at Kavo Gkreko and Koshi - Palourokampas SPAs through reforestations and silvicultural treatments – C.3
- Restriction of vehicular access in 13,5 km of forest roads, through installing chain link barriers at selected entries – C.4

- Installation of 18 infrared motion sensor cameras so as to monitor illegal hunting activities within the project SPAs – C.4
- Installation of 25 warning/information signs about bird trapping within the project areas – C.4
- Regular patrolling from the Game and Fauna Service (GFS) at the three sites, following a specific patrol schedule, so as to prevent bird crime related activities and to ensure minimum damage of project infrastructures – C.4
- Production of one report on bird crime for all three sites (beginning of project) – C.4
- Acquisition of the services of a Communication Expert (CE) – C.4
- Production of a Communication Strategy Plan – C.4
- Establishment of a Consultation Committee (CCo) to assess the problem of bird crime and deliver minutes for its seven meetings – C.4
- Delivery of an Action Plan with modifications/adjustments to project activities targeting bird crime, as well as suggestions for new ones with the same scope – C.4
- Production of a final report on bird crime for all three sites (end of the project) – C.4

- The Actions regarding the Monitoring of the Impact of the Project Actions (two in total: D.1 & D.2) that closely followed the development of the Conservation Actions of the project and their outputs, and assessed project's effectiveness. Furthermore, an evaluation was conducted regarding the social and economic components of the nearby communities as well as the ecosystem functions and services that were affected by the project. Both actions were implemented according to schedule without any noted delays. The specific outcomes achieved are:

- A Conservation Monitoring Protocol – D.1
- A Conservation Monitoring Report – D.1
- A Preliminary Study on the Impacts of the Project on the Local Economy and the Ecosystem Services – D.2

- The Public Awareness and Dissemination of Results Actions (three in total: E.1-E.3) of the project that focused on presenting its actions and disseminating its results to interested stakeholders, and to the wider public. All were implemented successfully and few delays that were noted in some cases did not hinder the project's goals in any way. The actions' outcomes are summarised as below:

- One 15' documentary regarding the project – E.1
- Four leaflets and three posters on birds, bird crime, and the project in general – E.1
- Two television advertisement spots – E.1
- Seven articles in the local media – E.1
- Ten presentations/lectures in elementary schools of the project areas – E.1
- Four school competitions on bird-watching – E.1
- Six educational excursion of schools of the project area to project infrastructures – E.1
- Participation in three local festivals with dissemination material – E.1
- Erection of four information kiosks at the three SPAs for posting updated and continuous information regarding the project – E.1
- Installation of 30 information signs near selected infrastructures created by the project – E.1
- Organising two workshops for raising awareness of stakeholders – E.1
- Organising two training event on forest fires for voluntary groups, hunters etc., of the project areas – E.1
- Publishing two newsletter for the project – E.1

- Organising a Final Information day for the project – E.1
- Creation and regular update of one website about the project – E.2
- Publishing of a Layman's report – E.3

Moreover, some outside LIFE activities took place regarding the dissemination of the project's actions and results which however did hinder its progress or budget. For more details refer to #5.2.2.1 pp.41-42.

- The Project Operation and Progress Monitoring Actions (four in total: F.1-F.4) of the project facilitated the coordination and cooperation among the project's beneficiaries, the collaboration of the project with its SCo, and networking with similar European projects. All actions completed without any noted delays. The outcomes of these actions are:

- Preparation of the Project's Management Guidelines – F.1
- Preparation of the Project's Progress Monitoring Protocol – F.1
- The appointment of an independent auditor that verified the financial statements provided with the present report – F.1
- Minutes of the seven SCo meetings – F.2
- Two report of the project's representative visit to other similar project – F3
- Organisation of an expert's workshop and delivery of its proceedings – F.3
- Preparation of an After-LIFE Plan for the continuation of the project's activities through the following years – F.4

In regards to the financial part, the project covered the **94,7%** of the total budget (€978.718). The FR is accompanied by **49** annexes, of which **19** are deliverables of the project and **30** are additional files with information on the project's progress. In addition, hard copies of dissemination material of the project are included as well.



### 3. Introduction

The project was carried out in three SPA sites, Kavo Gkreko (CY3000005), Koshi – Pallourokamos (CY6000009) and Stavrovouni – Potamos Panagias Stazousas (CY6000007). All three SPA sites face similar problems related to the availability of chemically free food and potable water for the avifauna due to intensive agricultural practises and drought respectively, the fragmentation of the naturally occurring habitats due to housing development, forest fires and lastly bird crime related activities. Moreover, a major challenge that both Kavo Gkreko and Koshi SPAs are facing is the degradation of local natural habitats by the past forestry practices which promoted the excessive use of alien tree species (mostly *Acacia* spp. & *Eucalyptus* spp.). The targeted bird species by the project (not all occurring in all 3 project SPAs) were the following 11 species: *Alcedo atthis*, *Burhinus oedicephalus*, *Caprimulgus europaeus*, *Circus macrourus*, *Coracias garrulus*, *Emberiza caesia*, *Lanius collurio*, *Lanius minor*, *Lanius nubicus*, *Oenanthe cypriaca* and *Sylvia melanothorax*.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- To improve food availability in the project sites, in terms of quantity, quality and diversity.
- To improve permanently water availability during the long dry period.
- To improve nesting conditions in the sites.
- To reduce human disturbance through enhanced awareness and limiting access in sensitive areas.
- To restore bird habitats in the sites.
- To introduce management practices that favour birds in routine forest management in Cyprus.
- To contribute toward combating bird crime through strict enforcement of legislation and implementation of an effective communication campaign.
- To improve public awareness on the need to conserve bird populations, the value of Natura 2000 network and the importance of the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument for nature conservation.

The achieved results and outputs of the project are:

- An evident change in forest management policy in Cyprus to incorporate conservation measures for avifauna of the forests, since during the project's duration several other infrastructures targeting birds were created by DF in other state forest areas.
- Improvement of conservation status of 11 Annex I (Birds Directive) bird species in the three project sites with an assessed increase of nesting pairs of breeding species of up to 7,1%.
- Reduction by 60% of the average number of bird trapping/killing incidents recorded in the project sites.
- Preparation of an integrated management plan for the Koshi site.
- Assessment of the population size and Favorable Reference Values (FRVs) for all the targeted bird species of the 3 project SPAs.
- Creation of five TFAs with an area of 5.510 m<sup>2</sup> in the three project sites, providing water, food, refuge and nesting places to bird species.
- Installation of 200 nests, sowing of 39.500 m<sup>2</sup> with cereals-legumes, establishment of 17 watering points, two rainwater collecting aprons, and construction of 399 running meters of dry stone walls.
- Construction of one weir in the driest of the project sites (Koshi) along a main gully.
- Removal of 16.062 individuals of alien/exotic plant species from Kavo Gkreko and Koshi.

- Restoration of 10,21 ha of five habitat types of Annex I (Habitats Directive) in the areas created by the removal of alien species and elsewhere via planting 5.380 trees and shrubs and through releasing suppressed indigenous vegetation.
- Implementing a large number of public awareness activities including the production of one 15' documentary, two TV spots, organisation of 6 bird-watching competitions among school children, two stakeholder workshops, 10 educational excursions etc.

It is estimated that the efforts of the project will enhance the capacity of the local dry ecosystems of the project sites to host successfully larger and healthier bird populations by ensuring adequate food and water supply for the avifauna of the project sites. Furthermore, restoration of indigenous vegetation will contribute to a higher resilience capacity of local ecosystems to changing climate conditions. The long term sustainability of the project results will be ensured through the commitment of the two national competent authorities; i.e. the Department of Forests (DF) and the GFS, to continue implementation of project actions as prescribed in the After-LIFE Plan [**Annexes 7.2.1.1, 7.2.1.2: After-LIFE conservation plan (gr, en respectively)**].

## 4. Administrative part

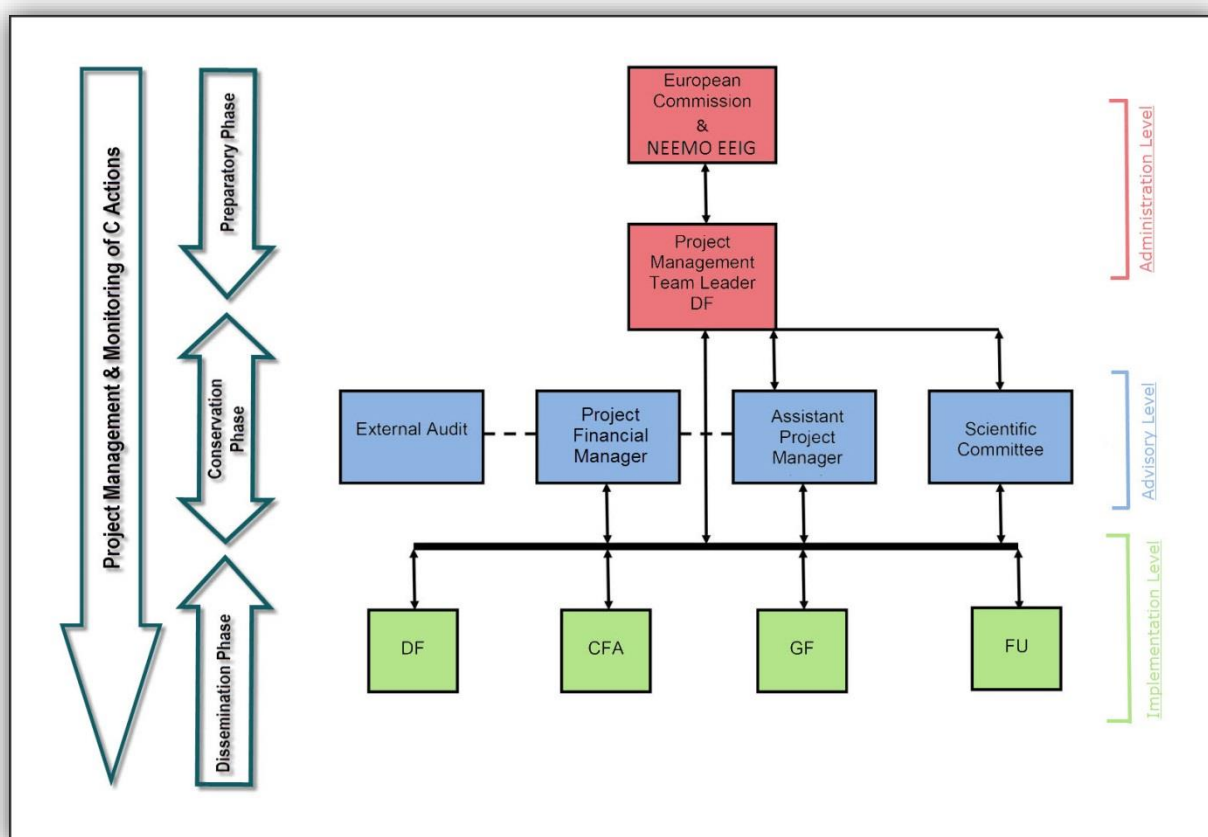
### 4.1. Description of the management system

The Coordinating Beneficiary (CB) and the Associated Beneficiaries (ABs) covered all aspects of the project's managerial needs by assigning explicit roles and obligations to team members based on their available personnel, skills and experience. A balanced workload for each one was carefully planned, in order to assure optimal quality of results, time management and budget control.

The PMT took overall control of the project implementation and project beneficiaries' obligations and activities according to the Project Management Guidelines. The personnel involved with the project for each beneficiary is presented in **Annex 7.1.2: Personnel List** of this report.

The project was divided into three phases (**Fig. 1**): The Preparatory Phase including the activities from Actions A.1 – A.3, the Conservation Phase including the activities from Actions C.1 – C.4, and the Dissemination Phase including the activities from Actions E.1 – E.3. Project management (Actions F.1 – F.4) and monitoring of the concrete conservation actions (Actions D.1 & D.2) started from the beginning of the project and continued until the very end.

**Figure 1:** Workflow Chart & Organigramme



The **project CB is the DF**. The DF comes under the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus and has a dual role: i) manager of state forest land

and ii) implementation of national forest legislation and policy. In this framework the DF is engaged with forest fire protection, management, landscape and nature conservation, reforestations and management of state forests that are part of the Natura 2000 network. The DF has long experience in implementing various European co-funded projects including LIFE projects, EEA Grant Projects etc. There are three ABs associated in LIFE-FORBIRDS. **GFS**, the second public agency involved in the project, is responsible for the protection of all wild birds (game and non-game) and their sites (SPAs) via the implementation of law 152(I)/2003 which transposes the European Birds Directive 2009/147/EU, and regulates all hunting in Cyprus (birds and mammals). **Frederick University (FU)**, namely the operating Nature Conservation Unit, which specializes on biodiversity conservation, natural resources management and conservation, and environmental education and awareness. The above unit is the only department in Cyprus' academic system that focuses on nature conservation and natural resources management. Finally, the last AB is the **Cyprus Forest Association (CFA)**, one of the biggest non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of Cyprus, with a main objective to contribute to the conservation of forest resources and nature of the island in general. The CFA has its headquarters in Nicosia next to DF premises, with which it has a long and constant cooperation.

The project's organigramme was developed, according to the project proposal (**Fig.1**). The management structure was formed in **three** separate levels:

- The Administration Level: Administration and coordination of the project implementation, covered by the PMT. The latter was also responsible for the overall monitoring of the project.
- The Advisory Level: This was covered by the SCo (Action F.2) the **Assistant Project Manager** (AsPM), the PFM and an External Auditor. Their role ensured the scientific support of the project, addressed all difficulties that arose during LIFE-FORBIRDS implementation, ensured the timely preparation of all the deliverables, monitored the financial activities carried out, and confirmed the reliability of the project's financial statement.
- The Implementation Level: This mainly involved project partners that actively supported the project via their personnel work and external collaborators. This level accomplished all tasks and achieved all objectives, as described in the submitted project proposal.

As regards to the **Administration Level**, the effective management and coordination of the project was undertaken by the PMT under the guidance and coordination of the **Project Coordinator** (PrCo) and the AsPM. The PMT was formed by nine members, namely the PrCo, the AsPM, the PFM, the CE, two Officers from the Parks and Environment Section of the DF, one representative from the GFS, the secretary of the CFA and a representative from FU. The PrCo, acted as the liaison between the EC and the LIFE-FORBIRDS beneficiaries' consortium, as well as the point of contact between the **External Monitoring Team (EMT)** and the ABs. The AsPM was in charge of controlling the implementation progress of deliverables, for the management of the project, the timely preparation of the reports, and organisation/planning of project tasks in collaboration with the PMT. The PMT had a key role in managing the project's activities, disseminating results and promoting public awareness, as well as establishing networking with similar LIFE and non-LIFE projects. Hence, throughout the project implementation had regular meetings, so as to plan the completion of the envisaged project's actions (**Annex 7.1.3: Key Meetings and Events**). Two administrative tools provided the appropriate support for the PMT's task, namely: a) the Project Management Guidelines and the Project Progress Monitoring Protocol (*see IR Annexes: 7.2.4 & 7.2.5 respectively*).

The PMT members were:

- Mr. Takis Tsintides - PrCo, DF's former Director
- Mr. Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos - AsPM, External Collaborator
- Mr. Alexis Onofriou – PFM, FU
- Mr. Kyriakos Pierides – CE, External Collaborator
- Mr. Haris Nikolaou, Forest Officer, DF
- Mr. Takis Papachristoforou, Forest Officer, DF
- Mr. Constantinos Pericleous, secretary of CFA
- Dr. George Demosthenous, FU
- Mr. Nicolaos Kasinis, GFS

The **Advisory Level** was addressed by the **SCo**, a group of experts that provided scientific support and know-how for crucial theoretical as well as practical aspects of the project. Apart from the PrCo (Mr. Takis Tsintides – DF), the AsPM (Mr. Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos) and one member of each project partner (Mr. Haris Nikolaou – DF, Mr. Constantinos Pericleous – CFA, Dr. George Demosthenous – FU, Mr. Nicolaos Kasinis – GFS), the SCo was established with the participation of selected external scientific experts, tasked with an advisory role and the evaluation of the project's scientific quality. These external scientific experts were:

- Dr. Pinelopi Delipetrou researcher of the Department of Botany - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, expert on flora and habitat types.
- Dr. Jean – Marc Dufour -Dror, expert on the control of invasive plant species (Applied Ecologist).
- Mr. Melis Charalambides, Chairman of the Birdlife Cyprus Council, with extensive knowledge on Cyprus' avifauna, of the project sites, habitats, species and threats.

It should be mentioned at this point that a SCo member initially stated at the proposal Dr. Costas Kadis was replaced by Dr. Pinelopi Delipetrou,. The replacement was necessary as a result of the appointment of Dr. Kadis as Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus on 14/03/2014, whereas by the time of the proposal submission he was available.

In total, the SCo effectively convened four times, and the first three minutes of the respective meetings were submitted with the two previous reports (see *IR: Annex 7.2.11*, *MR: Annexes 7.2.1.1 & 7.2.1.2*), whereas the fourth and last meeting was held on 05/04/2017 and the minutes are delivered with this report as **Annex 7.2.1.3: Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> SCo Meeting**. Moreover, each of the experts visited the project individually so as to inspect the on-going progress of the conservation actions and to provide expertise on planning issues. The expert on the control of invasive species Dr. Dufour spent two additional days in the field during the first SCo meeting on mid-March 2015, so as to supervise the initial stages of the removal of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) at Kavro Gkreko SPA, and three days on March 2016 in order to inspect the returning control of the site and the expansion of the control to an adjacent area. The expert on birds Mr. Charalambides visited the project areas on 08/04/2015 & 30/03/2017, and commented about the infrastructure targeting the avifauna. Furthermore he attended to five (out of seven) CCo meetings that were held. Finally, the expert on habitats Dr. Delipetrou visited the areas where habitat restorations took place between 06-07/04/2017.

Apart from the SCo, the PFM and an independent External Auditor [contract signed on 19/09/2016, (see *MR: Annex 7.1.4*)] contributed to the advisory level by ensuring the sound financial management of the project and the validity of the financial statements provided to the EC. The aforesaid auditor successfully delivered two relevant audits, one internal after the MR submission and one final one, both transmitted with this report as **Annex 7.4.1: 1<sup>st</sup> Report of External Auditor & Annex 7.4.2: 2<sup>nd</sup> report of External Auditor** respectively.

As regards to the **Implementation Level**, the AsPM established continuous communication via telephone and email with: Mr. Haris Nicolaou (Conservation Officer) – DF, Mr. Constantinos Pericleous – CFA, Dr. George Demosthenous – FU, and Mr. Nicolaos Kassinis – GFS. This was crucial so as to plan the implementation of project actions.

Within the framework of the **overall project operation and monitoring of the project progress (Actions F)**, networking with **seven** other projects (LIFE and non-LIFE) was established (Action F.3). **LIFE-OROKLINI** (LIFE 10 NAT/CY/000716) on 29/10/2015 and **BIOforLIFE** (LIFE 11 INF/CY/000863) on 01/12/2015, both projects in Cyprus (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.14*). **ForOpenForests** (LIFE 11 NAT/GR/1014) on 15-18/05/2016 where LIFE-FORBIRDS sent a team for its first abroad visit (*see MR: Annex 7.2.1.3*), and a detailed report regarding the visit and its outcomes was delivered respectively (*see Annex 7.2.1.3*). **LIFE Natura 2000 Value Crete** (LIFE 13 INF/GR/000188) & **LIFE Natura Themis** (LIFE 14 GIE/GR/000026) on 15-17/02/2017, both Greek projects visited LIFE-FORBIRDS and exchanged valuable experiences via presentations and a field trip (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.15**). **LIFE for the Lesser Kestrel** (LIFE 11 NAT/GR/001011) on 16-19/05/2017 [as suggested in Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016] where LIFE-FORBIRDS sent a team for its second abroad visit, and a respective report was delivered successfully (**Annex 7.2.1.4: Report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to other LIFE projects**). Moreover, a field visit of the Erasmus+ ‘Valgreen: Reforestation in the South of Europe as a profession for the future’ took place on 23/01/2017 (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.14**) at the infrastructures of Koshi – Pallourokampos SPA. Furthermore, representatives from DF and GFS participated at the LIFE Nature Platform Meeting on Wildlife poisoning, which was hosted in Athens, Greece on 19-20/05/2016. Finally, an **experts’ workshop** was organized by FU and carried out on 27/10/2017 at the Environmental Information Centre of Athalassa (DF premises). The agenda of the workshop included a presentation of the project’s actions and results, as well as other presentations by experts. Three experts participated, including Mr. M. Charalambides (member of the SCo), and two experts from Greece, namely Dr. R. Tsiakiris and Mr. C. Vlachopoulos, who shared their experience and knowledge gained through the LIFE projects they had participated in the past. The attendees reached the foreseen number (29 people) with representatives from competent authorities, universities and NGOs. Dissemination material; i.e. leaflets, posters, newsletters, was available during the workshop. The proceedings of the workshop, the invitation, the agenda and a participant list can be found in (**Annex 7.2.1.5: Experts workshop proceedings**). It should be mentioned, that all the above activities marginally improved the PMT’s knowledge base and know-how experiences in regards to birdlife management, hence fulfilling this action’s goal; i.e. to bring together scientists from similar projects.

To conclude, throughout the project’s duration 10 deliverables regarding the abovementioned framework were prepared:

- Project Management Guidelines (*see IR: Annex 7.2.4*) – F.1
- Project Progress Monitoring Protocol (*see IR: Annex 7.2.5*) – F.1
- Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> SCo meeting (*see IR: Annex 7.2.11*) – F.2
- Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SCo meeting (*see MR: Annex 7.2.1.1*) – F.2
- Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SCo meeting (*see MR: Annex 7.2.1.2*) – F.2
- Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> SCo meeting (**Annex 7.2.1.3**) – F.2
- Report from the 1<sup>st</sup> networking visit of team members to a similar LIFE project (*see MR: Annex 7.2.1.3*) – F.3
- Report from the 2<sup>nd</sup> networking visit of team members to a similar LIFE project (**Annex 7.2.1.4**) – F.3

- Proceedings from the experts workshop (**Annex 7.2.1.5**) – F.3
- After-LIFE Conservation Plan (**Annexes 7.2.1.1, 7.2.1.2**) – F.4

The Partnership Agreement was signed by the CB and the ABs on 01/11/2014 and was submitted to the Commission with the IR of the project (see *IR: Annex 7.1*). No changes whatsoever have been made to the Grant Agreement.

## 4.2. Evaluation of the management system

The nomination of the management bodies (PMT, SCo,) and their uninterrupted operation since the beginning of the project attributed to the success of the latter's implementation. From the very beginning, **the PMT was engaged in an on-going communication with the EMT**, including the transmission of monthly reports about the project's progress and also asking for guidance regarding administrative and financial issues. Moreover, the EMT visited the project twice; namely on 02-03/11/2015 and again on 28/02/2017, so as to catch up with the progress of the project and to verify financial issues. **The PMT established communication with the EC** via five letters received after the IR and MR submission, after the two EMT visits and after the EC team visit; namely: Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015, Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016, Ares(2016)324151 - 21/01/2016, Ares(2017)2953113 - 13/06/2017 & Ares(2017)4729687 - 28/09/2017 respectively. Furthermore, a letter was sent to the EC from the PrCo on 11/01/2016 regarding supplementary information requested, justifying the enlargement of the weir construction (Action C.2). In addition, the PMT has successfully transmitted to the EC and the EMT the following reports: a) Inception Report – 30/06/2015, b) Midterm Report – 15/10/2016, and c) Final Report – 31/03/2018; i.e. the current report. The PFM monitored the financial documents of the project, interfered whenever necessary (please see #6), and as a result no substantial problems occurred. Moreover, the beneficiaries focusing on the public awareness and environmental campaign, ensured the dissemination effectiveness of the project's progress and results. In total, no substantial problems hindered the project in reaching its goals quantitatively and qualitatively.

The progress of LIFE-FORBIRDS is presented in a respective Gantt chart, transmitted with this report (**Annex 7.1.4: Gantt Chart of LIFE-FORBIRDS**). The most notable delays are associated with the envisaged timeframe of the preparatory Actions: A.2 & A.3, both due to additional field data requisition that were deemed mandatory for the preparation of specific deliverables for each Action. Another delay worth mentioning is that of the envisaged milestone of action C.3 regarding the restoration of targeted habitats via reforestations. The delay is attributed to problems that the DF nursery faced in the production of *Ziziphus lotus* saplings (see #5.1.6). However, the situation was resolved via producing new plants, and hence the milestone was reached successfully. Other small insignificant delays may have occurred in some project deliverables and milestones, as will be presented in the Technical Part of this report (see #5.1 & 5.2), but overall the related actions were completed as envisaged in the project proposal. All in all, the project's achieved milestones and deliverable products, along with their dates in comparison to the envisaged deadlines, are presented in the following two annexes of this report: **Annex 7.1.5: Milestones of the Project** & **Annex 7.1.6: Deliverables of the Project**.



## 5. Technical part

### 5.1. Technical progress, per task

#### 5.1.1. Action A.1: Mapping of the exact locations for the implementation of concrete conservation actions and technical specifications

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 30/06/2015	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/01/2016

This action's purpose was to identify and map the exact locations of the infrastructures that would be created through the concrete conservation actions, and to elaborate technical specifications for those as well.

It was initiated on 01/10/2014 and was concluded by 31/01/2016. Between the second fortnight of December 2014 and the first fortnight of March 2015, DF personnel along with CFA representatives visited several times the three project SPAs so as to **select and demarcate the locations** where the concrete conservation actions would be implemented.

Subsequently, the field data collected served as a basis for the composition of **3 color maps**, depicting the locations of the interventions that were to be implemented via the four concrete conservation actions. Although the maps were delivered on 25/03/2015 (see *IR: Annex 7.2.9*), the PMT followed the recommendations of the Commission's letters: Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015 & Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016, and revised the maps accordingly, see *MR: Annex 7.2.1.4*, and **Annex 7.2.1.6: 3 maps of actions C (rev.02-2017)** respectively.

The preparation of a **composite technical report** by CFA followed, describing in detail the specifications of the constructed infrastructures as well as the used means/methods. Although the report was delivered in time, by the end of March 2015 (see *IR: Annex 7.2.6*), the PMT followed the recommendations of the EC letter [Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015] and revised the respective report accordingly (see *MR: Annex 7.2.1.5*).

Several field visits took place at Koshi site during October 2014, in order to finalize the location of the weir, near Avdellero village, on state forest land within the CY6000009 site. The tender regarding the technical study (design and preparation of the construction plans) of the weir was published by CFA, and awarded on 08/06/2015. The **technical study for the weir** was delivered on 29/01/2016 (see *MR: Annex 7.2.1.6*) after having embodied comments of the Water Development Department (WDD), the competent authority for water resources management, which granted the final approval of the study (permit for weir construction) on 01/02/2016 (see *MR: Annex 7.2.2.2*).

Field visits for mapping the distribution of alien / invasive species at Kavo Gkreko took place during January 2015 and lasted one month. On February mapping moved on to Koshi site and was completed during the last week of April 2015. Respectively, **2 color maps** scaled 1:10.000 were composed depicting the distribution of the **invasive and alien plant species**. The maps were delivered on 29/04/2015 (see *IR: Annex 7.2.10*) and served as baseline data for the assessment of the effectiveness of action C.3 (see # 5.1.8).

During the 1<sup>st</sup> CCo meeting on the 12/12/2014, several activities regarding addressing the problem of bird crime in the project areas were clarified. Specifically, details regarding which **roads to be closed** per project site and how this can be achieved in an efficient manner so as to deter trespassing, the specifications of the cameras to be installed at selected locations etc. The

decisions of the meeting were also embodied in the **composite technical report** (see above), prepared by CFA.

Within the framework of this action a **full EIA study** (see MR: Annex 7.2.1.7) for the weir construction at Avdellero area was prepared, as well as **two preliminary EIA studies** for the creation of the five TAFs and the cereal-legume fields (see MR: Annexes 7.2.1.8 & 7.2.1.9). The two preliminary studies were deemed unnecessary by the Department of Environment (DE) (due to the nature of the works) and regarded irrelevant to the legislative framework that imposes a preliminary EIA preparation, whereas the full EIA got its approval one on 27/06/2016 (see MR: Annex 7.2.2.3).

Time schedule: The action concluded on January 2016 with the completion of the full EIA (last deliverable of the Action), delayed by six months. However, there was a further delay due to the bureaucracy of WDD and DE for the approval of the technical study of the weir and the respective full EIA, the latter of which was obtained in June 2016. All in all, the aforementioned delays did not hinder the timely creation of the five TAFs & cereal-legume fields, nor the weir construction.

Implemented by: CFA (responsible beneficiary), DF (mapping of invasive alien plant species, provision of information to CFA), FU (preparation of EIAs), GFS (comments on the specifications of the nests and their installation locations, watering points, and plant species for the cereal-legume fields).

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Three maps with the locations of Actions C	31/03/2015	18/03/2016	See IR: Annex 7.2.9, MR: Annex 7.2.1.4 <b>Annex 7.2.1.6: 3 maps of actions C (rev.02/2017)</b>
Composite technical report with the specifications of Actions C	31/03/2015	17/03/2016	See IR: Annex 7.2.6, MR: Annex 7.2.1.6
Two maps with the distribution of alien plant species	31/03/2015	29/04/2015	See IR: Annex 7.2.10
Technical study for the weir	30/06/2015	30/07/2015	See MR: Annex 7.2.1.6
Environmental Impact Assessments	30/06/2015	31/01/2016	See MR: Annexes 7.2.1.7, 7.2.1.8, 7.2.1.9

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.1.2. Action A.2: Preparation of a management plan for Koshi – Pallourokampos Natura 2000 site

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/10/2015	<b>Actual end date:</b> 25/08/2017

The implementation of the Action began on October 2014. The action focused on the preparation of a **Management Plan** for the Koshi – Pallourokampos Natura 2000 site (CY6000009). The contents of the Management Plan for the Koshi - Pallourokampos site (based on the “Guidelines for the Preparation of Management Plans for Natura 2000 sites in Cyprus”, developed by the: LIFE04 NAT/CY/000013) were approved by the PrCo (DF’s Director) in November 2014. FU team proceeded in preparing the Management Plan, which included: i) data collection from several government services and local authorities, ii) visits at the Koshi SPA for data collection and iii) preparation of the draft Management Plan (*see IR: Annex 7.2.12*). The preparation of the descriptive part of the Management Plan was completed in April 2015 and the management measures for the area were discussed and finalised at a meeting between the PMT members on 25/05/2015.

The **draft Management Plan** for the Koshi - Pallourokampos site was submitted to the PMT, the competent authorities (DF & GFS) and the project’s SCo on 16/06/2015. As a result, more information was deemed necessary to be included; i.e. the Favourable Reference Values (FRVs) values for the avifauna of the area (population size assessment), and an update of the habitats mapping of the area. Due to the additional information required, an **updated draft management plan** was delivered on 01/04/2017 (**Annex 7.2.1.7: Updated draft management plan**). The latter was forwarded to the SCo of the DE for review on April 2017 and the official plan approval was acquired on 25/08/2017 (**Annex 7.2.2.2: Approval of A2 management plan**). The plan is currently operational and implemented by the respective competent authorities: DF, DE & GFS.

Time schedule: A miswriting in the proposal stated as a deliverable an “**Approved Management Plan for Koshi site**” with a deadline on 31/10/2015 and a milestone “**Final Approval for the Management Plan**” with a deadline on 30/06/2017, whereas both are the same. The “*approval*” term refers to granting an operational status for the plan by the SCo of the DE. The draft Management Plan was submitted to DF, GFS and the project’s SCo with a minor delay. Due to the revision of the draft Management Plan (supplementary info required), the updated version was linked to the deliverable of the “**Approved management plan for Koshi site**”. This revised plan was delivered with a five month delay on 01/04/2017, and was immediately forwarded to the SCo of the DE, which in turn granted the plan’s approval on 28/05/2017. It should be noted, that all the aforementioned delays did not affect negatively any of the project actions, since the plan operates in a different timeframe; i.e. the next 10 years.

Implemented by: FU (responsible beneficiary), DF & GFS (review and approval of the content of the management plan)

Deliverables	Due Date	Actual Date	Comments
Preparation of the first draft management plan for Koshi site	31/05/2015	16/06/2015	See <i>IR: Annex 7.2.12</i>
Deliver of an approved management plan for Koshi	31/10/2015	01/04/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.7: Updated draft management plan</b>

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Final approval of the management plan	30/06/2017	25/08/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.2.2: Approval of A2 management plan</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.1.3. Action A.3: Assessment of the population size of targeted bird species in the project sites

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/10/2015	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/07/2016

This Action was initiated in October 2014 and was concluded at the end of July 2016. It focused on the 2015's assessment of the population size for all targeted bird species in the three project SPA sites. For this reason, GFS conducted standardized monthly bird counts, so as to assess the population levels for each species. Appropriate transect routes were also established, and monitored with special weight given on breeding birds that are trigger species (species for which these areas were designated SPAs). Through this action a **Technical Report** (see MR: Annex 7.2.1.10) was prepared by 01/03/2016 that included description of: the project sites, the targeted birds along with their population sizes and FRVs, as well as the main threats identified per site.

The Habitats Directive requires Member States to achieve and maintain Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for those bird species identified to be of Community interest. The FCS of a species is estimated at national level (not at site level) and for a species to achieve a FCS, FRVs must be estimated. An FRV is the population's size or breeding density at which the risk of extinction is acceptably low, the species is biologically functional within the ecosystem and there is no contraction or decrease in its size and/or range. These FRVs **are set first at national level**, depending on available habitat and/or Population Viability Analysis or a combination of both. The Target Values (TVs) are the numbers of migrant/wintering (non-breeding) species that should regularly occur in the corresponding areas in Cyprus.

Through the **Technical Report** the estimated population for nesting species was expressed in nesting pairs, whereas for passage migrants as number of individuals. In addition, FRVs were set for the following breeding species: *Burhinus oedicephalus*, *Caprimulgus europaeus*, *Coracias garrulus*, *Emberiza caesia*, *Lanius nubicus*, *Oenanthe cypriaca*, *Sylvia melanothorax*, and *Melanocorypha calandra*. Finally, TVs rather than FRVs were set for four migratory species: *Alcedo atthis* (Kavo Gkreko only), *Circus macrourus*, *Lanius collurio* and *Lanius minor*.

Time schedule: The surveys were conducted on time, even though the production of the technical report was delayed by four months. This was deemed necessary **in order to establish island-wide FRVs and TVs**, prior to the estimation of respective site-FRVs/TVs. Monitoring of breeding birds continued until July 2016, so as to establish a complete picture, covering 2 breeding seasons (spring 2015, 2016) instead of one, thus assessing more efficiently the status of avian species in the three project SPAs for future reference. This was crucial in order to revise the respective SPAs' Standard Data Forms that were submitted on July 2017 by the DE, as requested by the response letter of EC [Ref. Ares(2016)324151 - 21/01/2016]. This action was completed successfully without any setbacks.

Implemented by: GFS (responsible beneficiary)

Deliverables	Due Date	Actual Date	Comments
Technical Report on the population sizes assessment	31/10/2015	01/3/2016	See MR: Annex 7.2.1.10

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

#### 5.1.4. Action C.1: Creation of traditional agricultural fields

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/05/2015	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/04/2015	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

This action aimed at the **creation of Traditional Agricultural Fields (TAFs)**, which in the past were common within Cyprus' forests but they gradually disappeared. These fields provide chemical-free food, adequate quality-water, shelter, protection and nesting places for various bird species and other animals.

The action was initiated on April 2015 with the **ground preparation works** (vegetation and stone clearing, ground leveling/reshaping, and cultivation) that took place at all five locations, selected via action A.1 (see #5.1.1), for the creation of TAFs in all three project areas. These soil improvement works were vital for the vigorousness and successful growth of the plants that were planted.

The two TAFs established at Kavο Gkreko (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.3,4, Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.1-4*) are within game reserve areas, covering 2.600 m<sup>2</sup> and 1.475 m<sup>2</sup> respectively. **Chain link fencing** construction followed for both, of 209 and 155 running meters respectively. **Dry stone walls** of 22,5 running meters were constructed to each, so as to attract small reptiles and provide nesting conditions for small birds. Furthermore, one **water pond** was constructed at each TAF. **90 total fruit and forest trees & shrubs** were planted at both (60 and 30 respectively), so as to provide food and cover for the birds. The above infrastructure where completed during October 2015. One **small area** was reserved at each field for planting sunflowers during 2016 and 2017 (25 sunflowers at each field). Sunflowers provide food for the birds by attracting insects and producing seeds. **Ready food points** for birds were installed at each TAF during June 2016, and since they were refilled when emptied. On November 2016, **one water tank of 45 t** capacity was build next to the small TAF for irrigation purposes. No water tank was constructed for the big TAF, which was instead connected to the water network of Agia Napa municipality. Finally **irrigation systems** were installed at both on September 2016.

The two TAFs established at Koshi – Pallourokampos site (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.3,4, Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.1-4*) are not within game reserve areas, covering 1.610 m<sup>2</sup> and 1.300 m<sup>2</sup> respectively. The infrastructure works, constructed between October-November 2015, of these two TAFs can be summed up to the following: a) **chain link fencing** construction of 158,5 and 152 running meters respectively, b) **dry stone walls** of 42,5 and 30,5 running meters respectively, c) one **water pond** for each, and finally d) 35 **fruit and forest trees & shrubs** planted at each TAF. Two **small patches** were created (one at each TAF) during January 2016, and sowed with the seed mixture used for the cereal-legume fields of action C.2 (see this report #5.1.5). In addition, on May 2016, **20 sunflowers** were planted at the patch of the small TAF, whereas on May 2017 **25 sunflowers** were planted. **Ready food points** for birds were installed at each field on June 2016. On September 2017, **two water tanks** (one 90 t and one 45 t capacity) were constructed near the fields for their irrigation. The large water tank can serve as a filling station for fire trucks, thus enhancing the protection against fire hazards in the area. Finally, on the first fortnight of February 2017, **irrigation systems** were installed at both TAFs.

One TAF was established at Stavrovouni area (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.3,4, Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.1-4*), not within game reserve area, covering 1.300 m<sup>2</sup>. The infrastructure works, constructed between October-November 2015, can be summed up to the following: a) **chain link fencing** construction of 142 running meters, b) one **dry stone wall** of 22 running meters, c) one **water pond**, and finally d) 65 **fruit and forest trees & shrubs**. Moreover, **ready food**

**points** for birds were installed at the TAF during May 2016. On May 2017, 25 **sunflowers** were planted to provide food for birds. A 45 t capacity **water tank** was constructed on October 2016, for the field's irrigation. Due to the extreme fire hazard risk of the area, and the remote location of the spot, the specific tank was also design to serve as a filling station for fire trucks. Finally on December 2016, **irrigation system** was installed at the field.

All the TAFs were regularly inspected (on a weekly basis) by forest officers of the DF and received maintenance such as tending of the trees, weeding, watering, bracing up, mesh wire installation, planting of new species or replacing failures etc. On February 2017 the gate of the small TAF of Koshi site was stolen and was replaced immediately. Maintenance works will continue as needed on the following years, as prescribed in the After-LIFE plan of the project.

The proposal envisaged the installation of **one watering point inside each of the five TAFs**. However, since the installed water ponds serve the same purpose; i.e. the provision of potable water for birds, the PMT decided that it would serve better if the installation of these five watering points took place within the SPA areas (2 at Kavro Gkreko, 2 at Koshi and 1 at Stavrovouni), thus enhancing the corresponding intervention of Action C.2 (see this report #5.1.5). The above were all installed by September 2016.

Finally, one **supplementary activity** was carried out, not originally envisaged in the project proposal; i.e. the construction of a small TAF at Avdellero site (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.2**) on June 2017. Next to the weir of the project, at the side of the riverbank, an area of 180 m<sup>2</sup> was planted with 20 fruit trees and was demarcated with a 33 m dry stone wall. This TAF is a simplistic version of the others, but complements the weir's purpose, since in proximity to the open water surface the avifauna of the area will have available resting places and food.

Time schedule: The action started one month earlier than stated in submitted project proposal, and the milestone for the creation of the TAFs was reached several months ahead of schedule. All of the envisaged infrastructures for the TAFs were constructed in time, apart from a small delay noted in the water tanks that did not affect the action negatively.

Implemented by: DF (responsible beneficiary)

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Creation of 5 traditional agricultural fields	30/06/2016	30/11/2015	<i>See Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.3-4</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.1-4</b>
Installation of water tanks, ponds, water points and bird feeders	30/06/2016	30/11/2016	<i>See Annex 7.2.2 pp.3-4</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1 – Photobook, pp.3-4</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: The PMT decided that the construction of four (instead of five) water tanks would suffice the goals of the intervention, since the large TAF of Kavro Gkreko could be connected directly to the water network of Ag. Napa municipality. In addition, concrete water tanks were preferred for the construction of the 45 t tanks (instead of metallic ones) for durability purposes.

The water points originally planned for installation inside the TAFs were considered redundant (since the installed water ponds serve the same purpose), and thus decided to enhance the corresponding intervention of Action C.2.

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable



### 5.1.5. Action C.2: Improvement of water, food and nesting conditions

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/03/2015	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/03/2015	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

The purpose of this action was to implement selected management measures within the three project SPAs in order to upgrade the availability of chemical free food, potable water, and nesting conditions for the targeted bird species.

The first intervention of C.2 involved the installation of **200 artificial nests** scattered within the three project SPAs (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.6*). Five type of nests were designed and produced: four wooden ones of varying size and one clay type for smaller birds; i.e. *Oenanthe cypriaca* etc. During the first fortnight of October 2015, 63 nests were installed at the three project areas, whereas the remaining 137 between the last week of March and the first week of April 2016. In total, 90 nests were installed at Koshi, 60 at Stavrovouni and 50 at Kavro Gkreko. The results of the intervention are encouraging (*see #5.1.8*) and a significant number of nests have been inhabited during the project's duration. Six destroyed/missing nests were replaced successfully.

**Twelve watering points** were strategically installed (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.6*) next to the cereal-legume fields (where possible) that were created by the project. Between the last week of October and the first week of November 2015, five watering points were installed at Kavro Gkreko, five at Koshi, and two at Stavrovouni, whereas **five watering points from action C.1** (*see #5.1.4*) enhanced this intervention; two installed at Kavro Gkreko, two at Koshi and one at Stavrovouni areas, between the period of July-September 2016. **The total number of watering points installed at the project sites is 17**, providing potable water for the avifauna of the project areas all year round. Maintenance of the watering points; i.e. check/replacement of accessory plumbing equipment and refilling of the 1 t capacity plastic tanks with water, was carried out periodically by DF employees.

Another activity of the action completed successfully, was the **creation of cereal-legume fields** (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.5*) for providing chemical-free food to the avifauna of the project areas. These fields provide both directly and indirectly food through seed production, but also through stimulating increased insect populations and favoring birds that prefer forest openings. Initially, ground preparation works began during May 2015 (vegetation and stone clearing, ground leveling/reshaping, and cultivation) at **10 demarcated locations within state forest land**, and sowing the fields followed up during November 2015. In total, six cereal-legume fields were created at Kavro Gkreko and Stavrovouni (three each), and four at Koshi covering a **total area of 27.500 m<sup>2</sup>**. In addition, **two privately owned fields at Koshi SPA of a total area of 12.000 m<sup>2</sup>** were sown, after achieving an agreement with their land owners (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.4*). The seed mixture that was sown (barley, vetch and peas) was selected after consulting the GFS, which already follows that practice successfully during the recent years. All the above fields were sown again on late 2016 and 2017.

**Two rain collecting water aprons** were installed on 07/10/2016 at two selected locations in Koshi site (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.5**). They collect and storage rain water, and can easily channel it to a specially designed waterer, thus providing water for the birds during the dry summer months. They are consisted of a metal surface that collects rain water, a reservoir tank (used for a capacity of 1 t), the waterer (usually made out of concrete and of 3,2 l capacity), and accessory plumbing equipment (hoses, fittings, float balls etc.). Maintenance of the aprons; i.e. check/replacement of accessory plumbing equipment, was carried out periodically by DF employees.



**399 running meters of dry-stone walls** (see Annex 7.2.2.1, pp.7, **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.2**) were constructed inside the TAFs, at the perimeter of the cereal-legume fields, and next to the weir of the project. They were built from local stones (abundant at all sites) and their role is to provide nesting places and cover for small sized birds, as well as to attract small reptiles that other birds feed upon. The first ones completed were those inside the TAFs during October 2015, followed by those next to the cereal-legume fields by the end of 2015, and lastly the one at the weir on June 2017. **In total, 15 dry-stone walls were constructed** (five at Kavogkreko, seven at Koshi, and three at Stavrovouni) of which five are within the TAFs and one next to the weir of Avdellero (see#5.1.4, pp.22).

**A small weir was constructed (Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.5, Annex 7.2.2.3: Report on the weir completion)** near Avdellero village (within the Koshi-Pallourokampos SPA). The tender regarding the weir construction was published and awarded during August 2016, the constructions started during September, and the weir was completed on 15/11/2016. The weir provides the site with an open water surface, thus attracting insects and small reptiles, and consequently contribute to food and water supply for targeted bird species as well as for the rest avifauna. Through the letter of 11/01/2016 to Ms. Drukman, clarifications were given in detail regarding the technical specifications of the weir, procedures to be followed etc. In the same letter the PrCo expressed his view on the benefits that a second weir would have on the wildlife and the avifauna of Koshi-Pallourokampos SPA. Unfortunately, after respective field surveys conducted by DF personnel, no suitable (stable for support) location was found for the construction of a second weir due to the soil properties of the area.

Generally, efforts were made in order for the effects of one intervention to complement the rest; i.e. the dry-stone walls were constructed adjacent to the cereal-legume fields, and a watering point was installed in proximity, along with some artificial nests etc. All, the aforesaid measures work in synergy, thus creating hot-spots for the birds within the project sites. Moreover, it should be noted that all these activities do not favour specifically the 11 targeted project bird species, but the whole avifauna of the project SPAs. To conclude, the aforesaid activities will continue to be carried out via the implementation of the After-LIFE plan of the project.

**Time schedule:** The action initiated on March 2015 with the planning of the cereal-legume fields. Some of the action's milestones were reached before schedule and some were delayed by a few months. All in all, the action's positive effects in the avifauna of the three SPAs are evident (see #5.1.8) and the goals are successfully met.

**Implemented by:** DF (responsible beneficiary)

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sowing of 10.000 square meters of private land with cereals and legumes	30/11/2015 30/11/2016 30/11/2017	04/11/2015 15/10/2016 30/11/2017	Sowing 12.000 m <sup>2</sup> of private land <i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 5</i>
Sowing of 20.000 square meters of cereals etc.	30/11/2015 30/11/2016 30/11/2017	31/12/2015 15/12/2016 15/12/2017	Sowing 27.500 m <sup>2</sup> of state forest land <i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 5</i>
Installation of 12 watering points	31/12/2015	06/11/2015	Installation of 17 watering points <i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 6</i>
Installation of 200 artificial nests	31/12/2015	03/04/2016	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 6</i>
Construction of 350 m stonewalls	31/05/2016	31/12/2015	399 running meters of stonewalls were constructed

			<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 7,</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook,</b> <b>pp.2</b>
Erection of two rainwater – collecting aprons	30/06/2016	07/10/2016	<b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook,</b> <b>pp.5</b>
Construction of one weir at Koshi site	30/11/2016	15/11/2016	<b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook,</b> <b>pp.5</b> <b>Annex 7.2.2.3: Report on</b> <b>the weir completion</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.1.6. Action C.3: Removal of alien plant species and restoration of indigenous vegetation

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/04/2015	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/03/2015	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

This action envisaged the restoration of five selected habitat types of Kavo Gkreko and Koshi – Pallourokampos SPAs, via a two phase approach; i.e. the removal of the IAS [after their mapping through the Preparatory Action A.1 (see #5.1.1)], and the reforestation habitat keystone species saplings. This action was applied at selected locations, where the invasive species, *Acacia saligna* in particular, had created compact and extensive clusters.

During the second fortnight of March 2015, the **control procedures** were initiated at Kavo Gkreko with the aid of an expert on invasive species (hired by the project during February), **targeting *Acacia* spp.** The expert demonstrated to DF personnel the practices to be followed, and supervised the initial stages of the treatments (see #IR: 5.1.6). The treatments continued following his guidelines throughout March and several days in April. The total area of the 2015's intervention covered **2 ha** and targeted **2.700 individuals**. (see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp. 8). During April 2016, the control procedure continued at the same location as an expansion, covering an additional **1,2 ha**, and treating **2.100 individuals**. On April 2017, the control procedure of acacia trees was initiated at three locations of Koshi – Pallourokampos SPA (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.6**), covering a total area of **2,1 ha** and targeting **10.720 individuals** (much denser canopy from plant clusters, and inclined surfaces). In total, **5,3 ha** were freed from the presence of **15.520 individuals**.

The aforementioned expert assessed the success rate of the 2015's treatments (see #5.1.8), which revealed an impressive **82,5%**. On April 2017 he revisited the area, so as to assess the 2016's intervention, only to find a success rate of **72%**. On November 2017, DF employees assessed the success rate of the intervention at Koshi – Pallourokampos site, and revealed a success rate of **80,6%**. All remaining survivors of all areas were treated again in order to achieve optimum results. *Acacia* is an extremely resilient species, that its removal is a timely and costly procedure that requires well trained staff. DF employees have incorporated the specific control procedure of that species several times in the past, according to the guidelines prescribed by the same expert, in various projects, and will continue to do so at the two project SPAs, as prescribed in the After-LIFE plan and in the management plan of CY6000009 (see #Annex 7.2.2, pp.53).

The above were supplemented by **tree fellings** that occurred at selected locations in Kavo Gkreko and Koshi sites, in order to create vital space for the restoration of naturally occurring habitat types in the areas, either by reforestations or by natural regeneration of the suppressed vegetation. **360 *Pinus halepensis*** and Pine hybrids were removed from an area at Kavo Gkreko SPA covering **1,57 ha** on June 2015. At Koshi – Pallourokampos SPA, **182** total trees were removed (158 *Eucalyptus* spp., 21 *Pinus halepensis* & 3 *Cypripedium sempervirens*) from a total area of **2.8 ha**. It should be mentioned that all the former species are not indigenous to the specific sites, and that the activity targeted selected (by DF personnel) individuals.

The woodcutters that performed the fellings at Kavo Gkreko and Koshi where locals from neighboring communities, and were compensated for their work with the tree trunks. Dead acacia trees of 2015's intervention were processed with a wood chipper machine and the woodchips were used as fertilizer for DF plantings. Dead *Acacia* trees of 2016's & 2017's interventions were removed between November – December 2017, and disposed to a green point (**Annex 7.2.2.4: Disposal of dead acacias at green point**). Selected individuals were left

to rot, both at Kavο Gkreko & Koshi Pallourokampos, so as to attract insects for insectivorous bird species.

The second phase of the action envisaged the restoration of five natural occurring habitat types at the two SPAs (see **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.6-7**). The restorations were all conducted via reforestations of specific species, depending the habitat type, but one; i.e. 5420, where the restoration was promoted through natural regeneration of the existing phryganic vegetation, via the removal of the canopy and the understory layers. The numbers can be summarized as below:

- **9320 habitat type - 2,45 ha, at both sites, 1.615 plants.** 83 failures replaced  
In total:
  - a) 1,35 ha at Kavο Gkreko, 678 plants (454 *Olea europaea*, 123 *Ceratonia siliqua*, 86 *Pistacia lentiscus*, 15 *Crataegus azarolus*) &
  - b) 1,1 ha at Koshi – Pallourokampos, 937 plants (506 *Olea europaea*, 282 *Ceratonia siliqua*, 114 *Pistacia lentiscus*, 35 *Crataegus azarolus*).
- **5210 habitat type - 2,65 ha at Kavο Gkreko, 1.910 total plants, of which 400 DF's own contribution to the project.** Overall, 1.410 *Juniperus phoenicea*, 180 *Pistacia lentiscus*, 170 *Olea europaea*, 100 *Ceratonia siliqua* & 50 *Bosea cypria*. 110 failures replaced.
- **5330 habitat type - 0,9 ha at Koshi - Pallourokampos, 705 plants.** In total, 430 *Crataegus azarolus*, 132 *Phagnalon rupestre*, 115 *Asparagus stipularis* & 28 *Noaea mucronata*. 35 failures replaced.
- **5220\* habitat type – 1,61 ha at Koshi - Pallourokampos, 1.150 plants.** Overall, 1.000 *Ziziphus lotus*, 150 *Asparagus stipularis*. No failures replaced yet, since the reforestation finished at the last month of the project, however a lot of failures are expected, since a success rate of 40% is considered high for *Ziziphus lotus species* (see #LIFE 12 NAT/CY/000758, *Final Report pp.27*).
- **5420 habitat type – 2,6 ha at Koshi – Pallourokampos**, released from canopy and understory layers for natural phryganic regeneration. The intervention was carried out at an area of 2.8 ha, of which 2,6 are the abovementioned, whereas the remaining 0,2 ha were used for the restoration of 9320 habitat type.

**To sum up, 5.380 saplings were planted in a total restoration area of 10,21 ha.**

Tending operations, namely: weeding, bracing up, watering, and replacement of failures took place regularly at all project reforestations during the spring and summer months. These operations will continue, as prescribed in the After-LIFE plan of the project.

Finally, DF carried out an activity not envisaged in the project proposal that targeted the 5210 and 9320 habitat types at Kavο Gkreko. The site faces a threat from unrestricted, 4x4 quad bike, off road recreational driving from Agia Napa and Protaras visitors. As a result, extreme fragmentation of 5210 habitat type has occurred in specific sites. 22 restriction barriers (without chain) were used for limiting the access to/demarcating the area of the 9320 habitat restoration, whereas 270 were used to protect the respective 5210 habitat restoration at “Somera” area (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.8**). The latter was approved during the E.C on-site visit on 07/07/2017.

Time schedule: The action was initiated a month earlier than scheduled. Delays noted specifically to the related reforestation milestones, are attributed to a production problem of ziziphus saplings in the DF's nursery of Athalassa (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.7 pics 1-3**). All in all, the target numbers of the envisaged milestones were surpassed.

Implemented by: DF (responsible beneficiary)

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Removal of 3.000 alien/invasive trees/shrubs	31/10/2015 31/10/2016	30/06/2015 30/04/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 8</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.6</b>
Restoration of habitat types through planting over an area of 2 ha (planting of 2.500 plants)	30/11/2015 30/11/2016	31/12/2015 15/12/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 9</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.6-8</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.1.7. Action C.4: Combating bird crime in the project areas

<b>Status:</b>	<b>Completed</b>		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

This Action began in October 2014 and focused on suppressing bird crime within the project SPAs through the implementation of specific activities:

1) A **CCo chaired by GFS was established** with representatives from: DF, Birdlife Cyprus, Hotel Owners Association, Cyprus Hunter's Federation, Union of Local Authorities, Local environmental associations and the CE (assigned by the project on December 2014). The CCo's role was to assess the problem of bird crime, as well as put forward suggestions mitigating it. During the project's implementation seven meetings took place and the respective minutes have been delivered (*see IR: Annex 7.2.1, MR: Annexes 7.2.1.11, 7.2.1.12, 7.2.1.13 and Annexes: 7.2.1.8, 7.2.1.9, 7.2.1.10: Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> CCo meetings* respectively). Through these meetings useful conclusions have been drawn that were utilised in an efficient manner and aided in the production of: a) an **initial report on bird crime** (*see IR: Annex 7.2.3*), b) of a **detailed patrol schedule** regarding the three project SPAs (*see IR: Annex 7.2.2*), c) an **Action Plan** with modifications to project activities and proposed additional ones for enhancing efforts towards combating bird crime (**Annex 7.2.1.11: Action plan on bird crime**), and d) a **final report** regarding bird crime with conclusions and useful suggestions for enhancing future efforts; i.e. the After-LIFE plan, towards combating bird crime (**Annex 7.2.1.12: Final report on bird crime**).

Through the Action Plan, **additional dissemination activities** were planned and carried out (*see #5.2.2.1, pp.41-42*). More specifically, the plan resulted in: a) the design and posting two billboard signs with anti-trapping messages, b) the design and printing a flyer with anti-trapping messages, c) the production of advertising material with anti-trapping messages, d) conducting additional lectures to primary schools regarding bird trapping implications, and e) broadcasting the TV spots of the project at movie theaters.

2) Through this action **18 infrared motion sensor** cameras were strategically placed at selected spots of the three project sites during May 2015 (*see IR: Annex 7.5.9 & MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10*). Purchase of 18 instead of 10, as envisaged in the proposal, was deemed necessary, in order to cover the sites more efficiently. Although their location changed occasionally for safety reasons and to cover different spots of the sites as well, three were reported missing (two at Stavrovouni SPA and one at Kavo Gkreko SPA). All in all, the camera placements were adequate for monitoring nests and other hot-spots for the avifauna of the areas (locations on cliffs, near streams etc.), as well as to record illegal incidents and activity.

3) Through the composite technical report (*see this report #5.1.1*) several forest roads were selected in all 3 SPAs to be closed for public access. This **vehicular control** aimed at the reduction of bird crime related incidents as well as minimising the disturbance of critical areas of the avifauna habitats. Initially the proposal envisaged the installation of **four heavy-type bars** and the control of around 20 km of forest roads. The 20 km target number corresponds in many more than 5 road openings and it would be difficult to be reached with the four bars envisaged in the proposal. Thus, during the PMT's meeting of 13/01/2016, a modification was agreed for the installation of **chain-linked restriction barriers** instead; i.e. a simpler design of two metallic tubes, pinned to the ground at each side of the road to be closed and joined with a galvanized chain with a padlock. Overall, this activity resulted in limiting the access to approximately **13,5 km of forest roads** (4,3 km at Kavo Gkreko, 8,5 km at Koshi and 700m at Stavrovouni) (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10*). The decision not to expand this management

practice at Stavrovouni (taken during a PMT meeting) was justified due to the extreme fire risk hazard of the area that requires unobstructed road access to fire-trucks all year round. A chain linked barrier equals to a delay for the fire-truck in reaching a fire incident within the forest, time that is crucial for the efficient control of a forest fire in its initial stages before escalation.

4) The installation of **25 warning/information signs** (see *MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10*) about bird crime, targeting visitors of the project areas was completed during May 2016. In total, five signs were installed at Stavrovouni area, 12 at Kavro Gkreko and eight at Koshi area.

5) GFS **acquired the services of a CE** during December 2014, so as to help designing an effective dissemination campaign for the project. Consequently, the CE prepared a first draft of the communication strategy plan taking into account all communication means envisaged in the project proposal during February 2015. After several comments by the PMT, a final **report on the communication strategy** was delivered by the end of October 2016 (see *MR: Annex 7.2.1.14*).

6) Finally, since during the whole project's timeframe GFS was **conducting regular patrols in all three project SPAs**, so as to prevent and control bird crime and poaching related activities, following the intensified patrolling schedule produced via the abovementioned activity no.1. As the Monitoring report of D.1 highlights, increased patrolling contributed to a decline in bird crime related incidents in the three SPA sites (see #5.1.8, **Annex 7.2.2.8 pp.12**), thus setting a paradigm to be applied in other SPAs in the future.

Time schedule: This action was carried out as envisaged in the project proposal. No problems arose through its course, and the delays noted in the production of the report on communication strategy and of the Action Plan did not hinder the action's goals whatsoever.

Implemented by: GFS (responsible beneficiary), DF (limiting vehicular access, installation of information/warning signs)

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Minutes of the 1 <sup>st</sup> CCo Meeting	31/12/2014	30/12/2014	See <i>IR: Annex 7.2.1</i>
Patrol program	31/12/2014	19/12/2014	See <i>IR: Annex 7.2.2</i>
Report on current situation on bird crime	31/12/2014	19/12/2014	See <i>IR: Annex 7.2.3</i>
Report on Communication Strategy	31/05/2015	30/10/2015	See <i>MR: Annex 7.2.1.14</i>
Minutes of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> CCo Meeting	30/06/2015	30/06/2015	See <i>MR: Annex 7.2.1.11</i>
Minutes of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> CCo Meeting	31/12/2015	31/12/2015	See <i>MR: Annex 7.2.1.12</i>
Action Plan on bird crime	30/06/2016	10/03/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.11: Action plan on bird crime</b>
Minutes of the 4 <sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting	30/06/2016	04/08/2016	See <i>MR: Annex 7.2.1.13</i>
Minutes of the 5 <sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting	31/12/2016	15/01/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.8: Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> CCo meeting</b>
Minutes of the 6 <sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting	30/06/2017	15/07/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.9: Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> CCo meeting</b>
Final report on bird crime	31/10/2017	31/12/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.12: Final report on bird crime</b>
Minutes of the 7 <sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting	31/12/2017	31/12/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.10: Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> CCo meeting</b>

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Acquisition of the services of the communication Expert	31/12/2014	19/12/2014	-
Installation of 10 IR motion-sensor cameras	31/05/2015	17/05/2015	18 IR cameras were installed <i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10</i>
Installation of 25 information signs	31/12/2015	19/05/2016	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10</i>
Installation of road barriers	31/12/2015	25/08/2016	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.10</i>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: 18 instead of 15 IR cameras were purchased (please see IR #6.3 pp. 26) so as to cover more adequately the three SPA sites (two of which are relatively large), however three were stolen. 74 chain link barriers were constructed instead of four restriction bars so as to close all selected road entrances efficiently.

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable



### 5.1.8. Action D.1: Monitoring of the impact of concrete conservation actions

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/03/2015	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/03/2015	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

This action was designed to assess the effectiveness of the concrete conservation actions as compared to the objectives of the project and to each Action's separately. For this sole purpose a **Conservation Monitoring Protocol** was delivered on April 2015 (*see IR: Annex 7.2.8*), and revised as suggested by the E.C letter [Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015] (*see MR: Annex 7.2.1.15*).

During the early stages of the project, baseline data were collected in order to serve as a comparative mean for assessing the criteria set by the aforementioned protocol. In particular, detailed mapping of the IAS distribution in Kavro Gkreko and Koshi areas was conducted via the preparatory action A.1, and the expert on invasive species filed a report regarding the initial situation of the IAS upon the first treatment in Kavro Gkreko (*see IR: Annex 7.5.8*). In addition, an ornithologist was hired so as to conduct an ornithological census for the three study areas during May 2015 (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.6*). Finally, GFS retrieved the past records for all the number of prosecutions per year, per site, related to bird crime.

During 2016 the concrete conservation actions have started to show quantitative target number results, as these were estimated by field studies from relative experts. More specifically, the expert on IAS estimated the success rate of 2015's control of acacia trees at Kavro Grecko to a very high **82,5%** (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.7, pp.4*). The ornithological monitoring census, carried out by the aforesaid ornithologist, between April-June 2016 showed a total increase in the breeding pairs of all three project areas of **7,1% for *Oenanthe cyprica*, 5,9% for *Sylvia melanothorax* and 5,4% for *Emberiza caesia***, all targeted species by the project (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.8, pp.11*). Moreover, a second ornithologist checked the nests, and reported that **6%** of them had been occupied (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.9 pp.2*). Finally GFS estimated a significant decrease of up to **57,35%** in bird crime related incidents occurring in the project areas (*see MR: Annex 7.2.2.10: pp.1*).

During 2017 the expert on IAS estimated the success rate of 2016's control of acacia trees at Kavro Grecko to a high **72%** (**Annex 7.2.2.5: 4<sup>th</sup> visit activity of expert on IAS**). The respective assessment of the control of acacia trees at Koshi site (*see #5.1.6*) was conducted by DF personnel on November and the success rate was estimated at a very high **80,6%**. As discussed during the EC visit on 06/07/2017, there was a problem acquiring the services of the ornithologist that elaborated the two aforementioned censuses. Unfortunately, no other qualified substitute was available and an expert from Greece was hired to conduct the census of 2017 during August (**Annex 7.2.2.6: Ornithological census report of the 3 SPAs 2017**). Sadly, his results cannot be compared to those of the two former censuses. Thus, only the numbers of 2016's census can be used as comparative quantitative results. The ornithologist that checked the nests, reported **16%** of them had been occupied (**Annex 7.2.2.7: Report on the artificial nests pp.2**). Finally GFS estimated a significant decline of **60%** in bird crime related cases occurring in the project areas since the beginning of the project (*see #5.1.7, Annex 7.2.1.12, pp.18*).

To sum up, it is a safe presumption that the activities carried out via the conservation actions of the project will incrementally attract birds as years pass by. This is a normal procedure that was also verified by the avifauna expert of the SCo, since birds need to get familiar with the locations of the infrastructures (especially nest boxes), an anticipated yet timely process. The above will be safeguarded through the implementation of the After-LIFE plan of the project. It

should be also noted that the foregoing activities favor all birds dwelling or visiting the project areas, and not specifically the 11 project targeted species. All the above are analysed in detail in a respective **Monitoring Report (Annex 7.2.2.8: Conservation monitoring report)**, envisaged in the project proposal and promptly transmitted with this report.

Time schedule: This action was initiated on March 2015 and its implementation was carried out according to the project's timetable; i.e. until the end of the project.

Implemented by: DF (responsible beneficiary: development of the Conservation Monitoring Protocol, monitoring of Actions C.3 and C.4), GFS (monitoring of Actions C.1 and C.2).

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Conservation Monitoring Protocol	31/03/2015	09/12/2015	<i>See IR: 7.2.8, MR: Annex 7.2.1.16</i>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.1.9. Action D.2: Monitoring of the impact on socio-economic aspects and ecosystem functions

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/11/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

The aim of this action is to identify and **assess the impacts of the project on important socio-economic aspects and on relevant ecosystem services** near the project areas. The action was initiated by FU on November 2014. The work included the preparation of questionnaires to be given to local communities near the study areas (assessment of public awareness and attitudes towards the Natura 2000 network/ targeted species and the perceptions on the project's likely impact on human livelihoods).

The **“Preliminary study on monitoring socioeconomic aspects and ecosystem functions”** (see *IR: Annex 7.2.7*) was prepared by the end of May 2015 and following the indications of the response letter of the Commission after the IR submission [Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015], the study was revised in order to include economic indicators (see *MR: Annex 7.2.1.16*). Further information regarding the baseline values, are shown in detail in *MR: Annex 7.1.1, pp.5-6*.

Taking into consideration the needs/ requirements of the project and the diverse form of work to be carried out, the analysis of the socio-economic impact of the project was assigned to professional members of FU, while for the ecosystem services, the Department of Environment was contacted, which in turn provided advice/ information regarding suggested methodologies on ecosystem services assessment. The information for the study was obtained from various sources of data; i.e. questionnaires/ surveys, site visits, public data/ information & work carried out for the needs of Action D1. The latter were included/ used in the study, but the main information and analysis of ecosystem functions were derived from the use of available tools (i.e. TESSA toolkit). The related study is transmitted herewith as **Annex 7.2.1.13: Final study on socioeconomic aspects and ecosystem functions**.

The aforementioned study consists of three main parts: the sociological, the economic and the ecosystem services. Almost four full-time equivalent personnel were involved in the project from the partners, and 170 external people were benefited/ collaborated during the project's implementation.

The people of the communities close to the project area have become aware of the project and its objectives, where they consider that more activities are required for the benefit of the avifauna in their areas. On the contrast many are still not convinced on the importance of stopping illegal hunting; this could be reversed when a correlation is made with the negative financial impact of bad publicity to the tourism sector of the island (visitors avoiding Cyprus as holiday destination, as an act of opposition against the abhorrent bird trapping practices). The project as such is not consider to provide significant revenue for the people of the local communities, but the long-term benefits of the infrastructure created can benefit the environment and nature-based tourism of the area. Furthermore, fire prevention activities carried out within the project framework can have a potential benefit of about €5 million (amount not spent for restoration activities in case of fire).

The ecosystem services provided by the areas of the project were evaluated, where the total greenhouse gases absorbed by Kavo Gkreco area is appx. 150,816 t CO<sub>2</sub>Eq y<sup>-1</sup>, by Potamos Panagias Stazousas is 296,136 t CO<sub>2</sub>Eq y<sup>-1</sup> and by Periochi Koshi - Pallourokambos is 1,310,826 t CO<sub>2</sub>Eq y<sup>-1</sup>.

Time schedule: The action was completed according to schedule

Implemented by: FU (responsible beneficiary)

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Preliminary study on monitoring socioeconomic aspects and ecosystem functions	31/03/2015	31/05/2015 15/08/2016 (revision)	<i>See IR: Annex 7.2.7, MR: Annex 7.2.1.16</i>
Final study on monitoring socioeconomic aspects and ecosystem functions	31/12/2017	31/12/2017	<b>Annex 7.2.1.13: Final study on socioeconomic aspects and ecosystem functions</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

## 5.2. Dissemination actions

### 5.2.1. Objectives

Public awareness and dissemination of the project's results play a fundamental role in achieving LIFE-FORBIRDS' goals; specifically those related with the desired attitude change towards bird trapping. Thus, a series of activities were implemented to reach the general public and intrusted stakeholders so as to increase their awareness in birdlife and bird crime.

The local authorities neighbouring the project areas, the schools, the local and foreign visitors, the media and all other relevant target groups responded positively to the project's call by participating, supporting and being actively involved in the implemented activities. In addition, the operation of a website for the project along with a public group created in a social networking website (Facebook), increased the project's exposure and helped to reach the wider public.

The project carried out the following dissemination actions:

- E.1: A multi-activity information and awareness campaign.
- E.2: The development and operation of a website.
- E.3: The production of a Layman's report for: a) the presentation of the project results and b) to serve as a guideline for implementing measures that favour the avifauna of dry land areas.

## 5.2.2. Dissemination: Overview per activity

### 5.2.2.1. Action E.1: Information and awareness campaign

<b>Status:</b>	Completed		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

The activities included in Action E.1 aimed at providing information, in order to increase public awareness on avifauna conservation, and towards mitigating the problem of bird crime in the project areas.

The target groups of the following activities were the following: Governmental and local authorities, residents of the area, students from elementary schools, local and foreign visitors, tour operators, hoteliers, relevant NGOs, hunters, forest employees of DF and the mass media. To sum up, Action E.1 resulted in:

1. The preparation of a **documentary** regarding the project with a duration of about 15 minutes, in Greek and subtitled in English, appropriate for various audiences. The tender for the documentary production was awarded in April 2015, but was delayed by three months, and finally delivered on 31/01/2017. During 2017 it was presented to the classes of the elementary schools the project had established contact with, in one stakeholder's and the expert's workshops of the project, in the networking visits from/to other LIFE+ projects, in the Final Info day, and was available for public display at the Environmental Information Centre of Kavro Gkreko. Furthermore, **500 DVD copies** were produced for distribution from the project partners to the Visitor Centers of the DF, Municipalities, organised groups, the general public, government officials, other local authorities etc. Finally, the documentary is posted on the two project webpages and on Youtube. It can be found in **Annex 7.3.1.1: Documentary on birds**, and is also provided in hard copy.

2. The preparation of **printed information material**; i.e. leaflets and posters. **Three kinds of posters** were produced during the first fortnight of September 2015, one for each project area containing both resident and migratory bird species of the Birds Directive (*see MR Annex 7.3.1.1*), **1.500 copies** altogether (500 of each), also provided with hard copies in this report as suggested by the Commission letter [Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016]. **Four leaflets** were produced in total, whereas two were envisaged originally in the project proposal. One regarding the project (*see MR: Annex 7.3.1.2*) printed in **1.000 copies** (500 Greek, 500 English), one regarding the birds of Mesaoria (*see MR: Annex 7.3.1.3*) printed in **1.000 copies** (500 Greek, 500 English), one regarding bird crime implications on the avifauna of the island printed in **1.000 copies** in Greek (**Annex 7.3.2.1: Leaflet about bird crime**), and one regarding bird crime printed in **2.000 copies** in Greek (see below pp.41). A nine month delay was noted in the preparation of the first two leaflets which were delivered on 15/06/2016. In addition to the above, **500 more copies** of the Greek version of the birds of Mesaoria leaflet were ordered, because they had all given out during the school visits of the project. All the posters and leaflets were available for distribution during the project's dissemination activities, and several hundred were yearly round distributed through the DF's Environmental Information Centres of Athalassa and Kavro Gkreko. The remaining copies, after the end of the project's duration, were shared among the project partners for further distribution at future events.

3. **Two TV spots** were produced through the project, one regarding bird crime, and a second one about the project on 25/11/2015 (*see MR: Annex 7.3.1.4*) after a months' delay according to the project's schedule. Both of them aired ten times between January - February 2016 on the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CYBC) 1 & CYBC 2 (PIK 1 & PIK 2). Since then, they were aired 30 times via the aforementioned TV stations throughout the whole 2016 hunting season (October – March), and the same was agreed to be carried out during 2017 (on-going). CYBC is Cyprus' public broadcasting service, and since the two TV Spots contain social

messages they are aired free of charge. In addition, the PMT as suggested in the Action Plan of C.4 (see #5.1.7), established contact with K-Cineplex, the largest operator of multiplex cinemas in Cyprus, and agreed on the screening of the TV spots at five of its multiplex cinemas, between October 2017 – January 2018, thus achieving a total of 1540 presentations (**Annex 7.3.2.2: KCineplex invoice**).

4. The project proposal envisaged the publishing of three articles (one each year) in local newspapers and magazines. In total, **seven articles were published** throughout the project's timeframe. The first on December 2014, in issue no.62 of "Forester" magazine, published by the Cyprus Forest College Graduates Association (see *IR: Annex 7.5.7*). A second article was published in issue no.466 of "Agrotis" magazine (see *MR: Annex 7.3.1.5*). The third article was prepared by GFS and published in "Fileleftheros" newspaper on 11/06/2017 (**Annex 7.3.1.2: Articles of the project pp.1-3**). Subsequently, two e-articles followed, one regarding the two highway billboards of the project containing anti-trapping messages on 08/07/2017, hosted at [www.city.sigmalive.com](http://www.city.sigmalive.com) (**Annex 7.3.1.2 pp. 4-6**), and one prepared by DF regarding bird migration on 12/10/2017, hosted at [www.alphanews.live](http://www.alphanews.live) (**Annex 7.3.1.2 pp. 7-12**). Lastly, CFA prepared an article devoted entirely on the impacts of bird crime. This article was published on 18/12/2010 in "Alitheia" newspaper (**Annex 7.3.1.2 pp. 13**), and in issue no.471 of "Agrotis" magazine (**Annex 7.3.1.2 pp.14-16**). The target group of all the articles is the general public of Cyprus, environmental NGOs, governmental libraries and the Ministry of Education.

5. An activity of the project that had a big impact in promoting the conservation of the avifauna of the island and discrediting bird trapping, was the **school lectures** conducted by GFS officers (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.10**). In total, during the project duration, **10 lectures were given to 749 students** (685 primary and 64 of secondary education), whereas six were envisaged in the project proposal. These extra lectures of this activity were suggested through the Action Plan of C.4 (see #5.1.7). In detail, the lectures were given at the elementary schools of: Paralimni/Ammochostos (19/02/2016, 140 students, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Sotira/Ammochostos (25/02/2016, 65 students, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Drosia/Larnaca (26/02/2016, 145 students, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Sotira/Ammochostos (16/10/2016, 64 students, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Paralimni/Ammochostos (24/02/2017, 47 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Oroklini/Larnaca (03/05/2017, 57 students, 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Dromolaxia/Larnaca (01/06/2017, 54 students, 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Oroklini/Larnaca (09/06/2017, 64 students, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Athienou/Larnaca (4/12/2017, 49 students, 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and at the Aradipou/Larnaca highschool (30/01/2017, 64 students, 30 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 34 2<sup>nd</sup>). All the lectures included a **powerpoint** presentation (see *MR: Annex 7.3.1.6*) regarding the birds of the project areas and the negative implications of bird trapping on their conservation status. The above presentation was revised (**Annex 7.3.1.3: 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation for school lectures**) as suggested by the Commission letter [Ares (2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016]. The students that attended the lectures showed great interest and concern about the birds of their areas and the implications of bird trapping activities; although some admitted they had already witnessed such activities carried out by a senior family member, or had eaten trapped birds. Posters and leaflets prepared by the project were distributed to the students and to the school principals for dissemination purposes.

6. An additional activity that targeted school children of the local communities was the organisation of bird watching competitions (see *MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.11*, **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.12**). **Four bird watching competitions** took place, and **245 students** of primary education participated. Analytically, the following elementary schools were involved: Paralimni (16/05/2016, 60 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Sotira (20/10/2016, 64 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade & 6<sup>th</sup>), Oroklini (03/05/2017, 57 students, 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Oroklini (09/06/2017, 64 students, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade). The 2016's contests took place near the project infrastructures at Kavo Gkreko, using bird decoys, whereas for the 2017's competitions the LIFE OROKLINI's kiosk was utilized so as to observe live birds at the lake. In all four contests a respective flyer was given to the participants with candidate species (**Annex 7.3.2.3: Birdwatching leaflets**), key points



regarding bird observation were explained by GFS officers, the students were separated in small groups, and the winning teams were awarded with commemorative gifts; i.e. books regarding avifauna and nature conservation.

7. The last project activity that reached public elementary schools of the local communities, was the **organisation of school visits at the project infrastructures** (see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.11, **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.11**). GFS and DF officers conducted several guided tours at the TAFs of Kavο Gkreko and Koshi - Pallourokampos, informing the students about the role of the infrastructures and the conservation efforts of the project regarding the avifauna of the island. In total, **6 educational excursions** took place, involving **315 students** of primary education. More specifically the following elementary schools were involved: Paralimni (16/05/2016, 60 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Sotira (20/10/2016, 64 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Paralimni (24/02/2017, 47 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Ag. Napa (06/04/2017, 55 students, 4<sup>th</sup> grade), Paralimni (01/12/2017, 40 students, 6<sup>th</sup> grade), Athienou (4/12/2017, 49 students, 5<sup>th</sup> grade). Some of the students that participated in this activity, had already attended the lectures given by GFS officers.

8. Each September, Agia Napa Municipality organizes the International Agia Napa festival. LIFE-FORBIRDS **participated at the 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> festival** (see MR Annex 7.2.2.1 pp.11, and **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.13**) during the last weekend of September 2016, 2016 and 2017 respectively. The project posted three foam boards for display purposes, and distributed hundreds of copies from its dissemination material; i.e. posters, leaflets and newsletters to the festival visitors.

9. On 29/10/2016, the project completed the erection of **four permanent information kiosks** (see MR Annex 7.2.2.1 pp. 12), two in Kavο Gkreko, one at Koshi - Pallourokampos, one at Stavrovouni, and information material regarding the birds of each area was posted respectively. During March 2016, new information material regarding the negative implications of bird crime was posted on the kiosks for public display. During a PMT meeting on May 2017, it was decided not to create an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> poster, since the space on the kiosks was limited and the result would be cluttered and visually unappealing. It should be noted that the kiosks are located at high traffic spots and seen daily by tourists, school children and inhabitants of the neighbouring areas. Finally, two times a poster was removed from the kiosk next to the TAF of Kavο Gkreko, and the DF restored it.

10. Another activity of this action was the installation of **30 information signs** near selected infrastructures of the project. By 22/09/2016, 11 signs were installed at Kavο Gkreko, five at Stavrovouni, and 14 at Koshi area. All signs were installed near the project's infrastructures and interventions: traditional agricultural fields, cereal-legume fields, habitat restorations through reforestation, restriction barriers for limiting road access etc. [see MR: Annex 7.2.2.1 pp. 12, and **Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.5,6,8 (pics 3,6,4 respectively)**]. The signs inform viewers about the purpose of the infrastructure/intervention, and the funding source. Target groups for this activity are visitors, schools visiting the sites and inhabitants collecting wild herbs in the forest.

11. Two **stakeholder workshops** were organized by GFS during the project implementation timeframe. On 19/04/2016, 42 participants attended the first workshop which was hosted at the Environmental Information Centre of Athalassa (see MR: Annex 7.3.2.1). The second day of that workshop was combined with the celebration of the Natura 2000 day, where an exhibition took place on 20/05/2016 at Kavο Gkreko with 32 participants. The second workshop was carried out on 29/05/2017 (**Annex 7.3.2.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> stakeholder workshop**), a one day event with 44 participants, combined again with the celebration of the Natura 2000 day, hosted at the Environmental Information Centre of Kavο Gkreko. During all workshops, the participants were officers of the DF, of the Cyprus Police, of the GFS and representatives of several NGOs. In all workshops, powerpoint presentations were conducted by GFS officers and the As.P.M. The presentations regarded issues such as a) Natura 2000 Network and SPA areas in Cyprus, b) Birds Directive and relevant national legislation on wild birds in Cyprus, c) LIFE-



FORBIRDS project and progress, and d) bird trapping and efforts to combat it in Cyprus. Both workshops included field visits to the TAFs of Kavro Gkreko, where the participants had the chance to get familiar with the project's activities.

12. Another activity of this action involving the local communities was the organisation of **two training events of voluntary groups on forest fires**, both held at the DF premises of Kornos forest station (Stavrovouni area). The first one on 03/06/2016 with 19 participants (*see MR: Annex 7.3.2.2*) and the second one on 09/06/2017 with 38 participants (**Annex 7.3.2.5: 2<sup>nd</sup> training event on fire fighting**). In both events, emphasis was given in demonstrating fire fighting equipment and analysing tactics. All the attendees were residents as well as representatives of the community councils of the nearby villages, and forest workers. Moreover, since the majority of the participants were hunters, special references were made regarding bird trapping implications and the conservation efforts of LIFE-FORBIRDS.

13. **Two newsletters** regarding the project's progress were prepared from CFA; delivered on 06/09/2016 (*see MR: Annex 7.3.1.7*), and on 27/10/2017 (**Annex 7.3.1.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter**). The first newsletter is 8 pages in Greek and was printed in 1000 copies, whereas the second one 12 pages in Greek and was printed 1500 copies. Both newsletters were shared among project partners to be distributed to relative stakeholder groups (local authorities, governmental departments, NGOs etc.) and public events.

14. The last activity of this action was the realisation of the **Final Information event**, organised by CFA, and hosted at the Environmental Information Centre of Kavro Gkreko on 19/12/2017 (**Annex 7.3.2.6: Final info day**). 36 participants in total attended the event, and three powerpoint presentations were conducted regarding the project's accomplishments and the avifauna of the island. All attendees were given memorial gifts (fridge magnets with anti-trapping messages, attached with this report) and dissemination material; i.e. layman's report, leaflets, posters, newsletters, stickers and notebooks.

In addition to all of the above, some supplementary (not envisaged in the project proposal) dissemination activities took place, which however did not affect its progress or budget. Namely:

1. The **participation of the project with a poster at two congresses**, namely the 13<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Zoogeography and Ecology of Greece and Adjacent Regions, Irakleio - Greece, 07-11/10/2015 (*see MR: Annex 7.3.2.3*), and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cyprus Association of Professional Foresters Conference, Nicosia - Cyprus, 28/07/2017 (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.13**)
2. The design, renting and posting on **two motorway billboard signs** anti-trapping messages (**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.13**). The signs were posted on 06/07/2017 and are still in display, since no other advertisement rented the billboard signs for display from the owner company. Their location is near Koshi site, at the traffic lanes with direction from Larnaca to Nicosia. Since this is the major road that joins the capital with the biggest airport of the island, it is estimated that the signs were viewed by over 2.500.000 passing vehicles (numbers acquired by the Department of Public Works). This activity was proposed through the Action Plan of C.4 (see #5.1.7).
3. The **dissemination of 1.060 leaflets** (**Annex 7.3.2.7: Mailed leaflet**) via the post office. A single page leaflet regarding bird-trapping implications was printed in 2.000 copies, and was distributed door to door in 5 local communities of the project as follows: Delikipos (30 recipients), Sia (250 recipients) Kornos (230 recipients), Purga (200 recipients), Mosfiloti (350 recipients). The remaining leaflets were shared among partners for further dissemination. This activity was proposed through the Action Plan of C.4 (see #5.1.7).
4. The design and production of **advertising material; i.e. stickers and notebooks**. 300 stickers and 500 notebooks were produced for dissemination purposes at project events. Both have anti-trapping messages, and are included in hard copy with this report. This activity was proposed through the Action Plan of C.4 (see #5.1.7).

5. **Six radio broadcasts**, of which five 40' on Astra FM nationwide radio station, namely at "The Animal's Farm"; a show regarding environmental issues: aired on 07/03/2015 where the AsPM discussed about the project and the Natura 2000 event, another on 10/12/2015 where GFS officer N. Kasinis talked about the importance of SPA areas in Cyprus and mentioned the project, on 18/02/2016 where N. Kasinis discussed about the conservation efforts for Barn Owls and other targeted bird species, mentioning the project's goals and the installation of nest boxes through its actions, on 15/06/2017 where N. Kasinis discussed about bird trapping implications and the project efforts for mitigating the problem, on 14/12/2017 N. Kasinis talked about bird-life, negative implications of poison baits, and the project, and one 25' on CYBC1 on 24/03/2016, where N. Kasinis talked exclusively about LIFE-FORBIRDS.
6. **Two TV broadcasts** at CYBC1, namely on 24/03/2015, where N. Kassinis discussed about the project, its conservation objectives and actions, and again on 31/05/2107 where a barn owl ringing by GFS personnel was covered, and a special mention was given on LIFE-FORBIRDS and its conservation efforts towards minimizing the threats posed from bird trapping.

Time schedule: Delays that should be noted are: nine months in the production of the leaflets, six months in the production of the 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter, four months in the production of the 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter, 14 months in publishing the second article of the project, eight months in publishing the third article of the project, four months in the erection of the information kiosks, and six months in completing the last three educational excursions. However some of these delays were expected and mentioned in the MR. Nonetheless, since other dissemination activities were been carried out, no negative impact on the action's progress or its implementation was noted. Moreover, additional activities took place that enhanced the results of the action. To sum up, most of the activities were concluded on time and overall the action is considered successfully implemented.

Implemented by: DF (responsible beneficiary), CFA undertaken activities: 2, 4, 8, 13, and 14, DF undertaken activities: 9, 10, 11 and GFS undertaken activities: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Delivery of a documentary on birds	31/10/2016	31/01/2017	<b>Annex 7.3.1.1: Documentary on birds</b>
Preparation and distribution of printed material (2 leaflets and 2 posters)	31/12/2015	15/09/2016 (posters ready by 15/09/2015)	<i>See MR: Annexes 7.3.1.1, 7.3.1.2, 7.3.1.3</i> <b>2 additional leaflets were produced</b> <b>Annex 7.3.2.1: Leaflet about bird crime</b> <b>Annex 7.3.11: Mailed leaflet</b>
Production of TV spot on birds	31/10/2015	25/11/2015	<i>See MR: Annex 7.3.1.4</i>
Publication of 3 Articles on the project	30/04/2015 30/04/2016 30/04/2017	29/06/2015 11/06/2017 18/12/2017	<i>See IR: Annex 7.5.7, MR: Annex 7.3.1.5</i> <b>Annex 7.3.1.2: Articles of the project</b>
Power point presentation on birds for schools	31/03/2016	03/03/2016	<i>See MR: Annex 7.3.1.6</i> <b>Annex 7.3.1.3: 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation for school lectures</b>
Newsletters of the project (x2)	31/03/2016 30/06/2017	06/09/2016 27/10/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.3.1.7</i> <b>Annex 7.3.1.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter</b>

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Erection of 4 information kiosks / notice boards	30/06/2015	29/10/2015	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 12</i>
Broadcast of a TV spot on a TV station	30/11/2015	01/01/2016	-
Participation in local festivals/exhibitions (x3)	30/11/2015	25-27/09/2015 23-25/09/2016 22-24/09/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 11</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.13</b>
Deliver of 3 lectures in schools (x2)	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	26/02/2016 03/05/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.1.23 pp. 42-44</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook pp.10</b>
Two-day awareness workshop for stakeholders (x2)	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	20/05/2016 29/05/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.3.2.1</i> <b>Annex 7.3.2.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> stakeholder workshop</b>
Realisation of two bird – watching competitions between schools (x2)	31/03/2016 30/11/2017	16/05/2016 29/05/2017	<i>See Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 11</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.12</b>
Training events on forest fire fighting (x2)	31/05/2016	03/06/2016	<i>See MR: Annex 7.3.2.2</i> <b>Annex 7.3.2.5: 2<sup>nd</sup> Training event on fire fighting</b>
Organisation of 3 school educational excursions to the project sites (x2)	30/11/2016 31/05/2017	24/02/2017 04/12/2017	<i>See MR: Annex 7.2.2.1, pp. 11</i> <b>Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook, pp.11</b>
Organisation of a Final Information Day event	30/11/2017	19/12/2017	<b>Annex 7.3.2.6: Final info day</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.2.2.2. Action E.2: Website Development

<b>Status:</b>	<b>Completed</b>		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Actual start date:</b> 01/10/2014	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 31/12/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 31/12/2017

This action focused on the presentation and the dissemination of the results that arose from the project through the development of a website. The latter started in November 2014. The English version of the website was published online during the first fortnight of February 2015 and the Greek version in March 2015, both under the domain name: <http://www.lifeforbirds.eu>. Currently both versions (Greek and English) are functional and include descriptions of the project's objectives and expected results, the progress made and detailed description of actions, milestones and deliverables. Moreover, descriptions of the 3 study areas are provided along with information about the partners and links to other similar projects. Overall, the website has surpassed the targeted minimum number of hits per month (100 hits/month), achieving an impressive **205 hits/month** in a period of 36 months. In addition, it was visited a total **12.875 times** during the aforementioned period (**Annex 7.3.2.8: Website traffic analytics**). Following the indications of the Commission letters [Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015, Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016, Ares(2017)4729687 - 28/09/2017], the following changes were made: a) a bullet point text with the corresponding project progress per month was added to the website's respective page, b) attention was given so as to update the date displayed on the homepage after each change in the webpage content, c) acknowledgements were given to all the audio-visual material not produced through the project, and d) the English subtitled version of the documentary was uploaded in the English version of the website. Finally, as prescribed in the After-LIFE plan, the website was migrated to FU servers for future hosting. A link to the Final Report of the project will be created at the "Announcements" section, after its submission to the E.C, for future reference.

In addition to the above, a public group in a social networking website (Facebook) was created on 13/03/2015 at the web address: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lifeforbirds>. The group serves as a second website for the project, having up to now **607 subscribed members** that receive regular updates about the project's progress through notification posts with pictures and explanatory text.

Both the website and the Facebook group will periodically get future updates from FU stuff, which will act as administrators.

Time schedule: The action followed the timeline of the project's proposal (October 2014 – December 2017). No problems were encountered during its implementation.

Implemented by: DF (responsible beneficiary)

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Website operation	31/03/2015	15/02/2015	The website was migrated to FU servers after 31/12/2017

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.2.2.3. Action E.3: Layman's report

<b>Status:</b>	<b>Completed</b>		
<b>Foreseen start date:</b> 01/10/2017	<b>Actual start date:</b> 1/10/2017	<b>Foreseen end date:</b> 30/11/2017	<b>Actual end date:</b> 30/11/2017

This Action focused on the presentation and publication of the project results through the production of a Layman's report. The Layman's report besides the project results and experiences, includes a separate section with general recommendations, prescriptions and technical details about useful management practices that can be applied in dry, lowland forest areas of Cyprus to favor bird populations. This section serves as a kind of guideline to Cypriot forest managers in the field of employing appropriate management measures to favor birds.

This action started and finished on schedule, and produced a Layman's report of 20 color pages, in Greek (700 copies) and English (300) copies. Since the report's second part serves as a guideline for Cypriot forest managers, emphasis was given so as to deliver it to every single DF employee; hence the 700 Greek copies. The report was distributed at the Final Info day of the project along with other information material (flyers, newsletters etc.). The rest copies were given to the project partners for further distribution. The Layman's report can be found in **Annex 7.3.1.5 & Annex 7.3.1.6**. It is also provided in hard copy.

Time schedule: The action followed the timeline of the project proposal (November 2017 – December 2017). No problems were encountered whatsoever.

Implemented by: CFA (responsible beneficiary), DF, FU, GFS contributed in the composition process (comments, photographs etc.).

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
A layman's report	30/11/2017	30/11/2017	<b>Annex 7.3.1.5: Layman's report en</b> <b>Annex 7.3.1.6: Layman's report gr</b>

Changes in the Technical Part of the action: Not applicable

Changes in the Financial Part of the action: Not applicable

### 5.3. Evaluation of Project Implementation

On the whole, LIFE-FORBIRDS can be considered successful in achieving its overall objectives in a precise and timely manner. Throughout the project's implementation the PMT focused on its role to coordinate communication and information exchange among partners, monitor scheduled actions, budget with actual costs and prepare reports as well as disseminate project outcomes. All difficulties that occurred were addressed promptly and efficiently, mainly owing to the coherent cooperation between the PMT, the consultation by the SCo and the CCo, and the feedback from the EMT. The project's actions were carried out according to the layout of the initial proposal, so as to ensure proper implementation within the desirable time frame.

To begin with, the preparatory actions were important for the initial conservation status assessment of both the avifauna and the habitat types of the 3 SPAs, as well as for defining the locations and the specifications of the proposed infrastructures. The information gained from these actions provided the basis for proper management of the areas as well as for evaluating the project's success and achievement of objectives. All of them have completed successfully with a few months delay noted for A.2 & A.3, which did not hinder the project goals in any way. The information derived from the completion of these actions provided a sound basis for the implementation of the concrete conservation actions. The latter, applied among others pilot *in situ* conservation measures that improved the provision of food, water and nesting places for the avifauna of the 3 SPAs. A minor delay noted in the completion of relevant infrastructures of action C.2, namely the construction of the water tanks, did not have any negative impact whatsoever. Other conservation actions carried out included a two phase restoration of several natural habitat types affected by the presence of IAS in 2 SPAs, via initially removing the IAS and consequently reintroducing native flora species. A one year delay was noted in removing the targeted number of IAS in Koshi area, as well as planting the required saplings for the habitat's restoration. The delay is mainly attributed to the availability of *Ziziphus lotus* saplings from the state forest nursery of Athalassa. However, all restoration phases were completed successfully meeting the set goals of the project, and by following the provisions of the After-LIFE Plan the viability of the restored habitat types will be safeguarded. Finally, conservation actions targeting bird-crime activities were addressed with action C.4, and auxiliary dissemination activities were carried out as envisaged at the C.4's respective Action Plan. Results from the monitoring of the conservation actions (D.1) by surveys carried out by the ornithologists of the project, the expert for the control of the invasive species, as well as from GFS, revealed positive impacts from the interventions that will build up incrementally as years go by. Thus, it is safe to assume that the C group actions contributed to the projects' goals, and the continuation of their activities through the After-LIFE Plan will protect the conservation status of the avifauna of the 3 SPAs. The socioeconomic study of D.2 revealed the beneficial role of the project to the local communities surrounding the 3 SPAs both on social and economic components, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services. The dissemination activities (E actions) contributed significantly to the project's proper implementation since they provided the means for reaching targeted stakeholders and the general public. All dissemination activities reached the foreseen public acceptance and participation. Their goal was twofold: to raise awareness against bird-trapping (especially in young ages), and to disseminate the project results to the general public and to stakeholders (especially DF employees & Cypriot foresters). The project carried out activities such as: school lectures & excursions, bird watching competitions, TV spot broadcasts at national television and movie theatres, radio interviews and TV hostings, stakeholder workshops, articles in newspapers, magazines and websites, distribution of information material (posters, leaflets, newsletters, stickers, notebooks and a Layman's report), posting highway billboards, participation in events and two websites updated on a monthly basis to name but a few. The aforementioned activities were all completed successfully, and small delays in relative deliverables or milestones did not hinder the dissemination campaign in any way.

All the project actions served specific objectives and operated under different time frames. Thus, their results were not apparent simultaneously. The project actions results that were associated with infrastructure development were immediately apparent. However, some of the respective activities that aimed at improving the birds' habitats: restoration of habitats, installation of nests, establishment of cereal-legume fields & TAFs and installation of watering points will yield results incrementally through the following years. In addition, the results derived from the implementation of the Koshi - Pallourokampos SPA management plan (A.2) are expected to manifest in the long term. All of the dissemination results became evident during the project's timeframe since they are outcomes of an on-going process that comprised public awareness and stakeholder involvement. Finally, the sustainability of both short and long term project results will be ensured through the implementation of the After-LIFE Conservation Plan.

The main objectives of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project were: a) to implement conservation / management measures that will substantially improve ecological conditions for selected bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive occurring in the Natura 2000 (SPA) sites Kavo Gkreko (CY3000005), Koshi – Pallourokampos (CY6000009) and Stavrovouni – Potamos Panagias Stazousas (CY6000007), b) through the implementation of these pilot conservation management measures to demonstrate to the Cypriot foresters and other stakeholders, the benefits of adopting a more holistic forest management approach that will address the needs of birds dwelling in or visiting the forest, and c) to contribute towards, enhancement of public awareness on the need to conserve wild birds and combating bird crime within the broader project area. The results obtained in comparison with the project's objectives are considered successful; hence the latter are met both quantitatively and qualitatively. These objectives and their evaluation are presented in the table below:

**Table 1:** Total evaluation of achieved project objectives

Objective	Task	Foreseen in the proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
To identify and map the locations where C actions interventions will take place and to elaborate detailed specifications for those	Delivery of detailed maps representing the exact locations of Actions C, along with boundaries of ecological fields	Three color maps (one for each project site) of a suitable scale, possibly of 1:2.000	Three color maps (one for each project site) of a suitable scale, possibly of 1:2.000	<u><b>ACHIEVED</b></u>  The derived maps provided demarcation of the locations for the concrete conservation activities materialisation
	Delivery of detailed maps representing the distribution of invasive and other alien species, with suitable stratification of density classes and species	Two color maps (one for each site) with a scale of 1:5.000	Two color maps (one for each site) of a suitable scale	

Elaborate technical specifications for the project's infrastructures, and compliance with the environmental regulations	Composite technical report with the specifications of Actions C	Composition of a composite technical report	One technical report	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The derived reports/studies provided useful data for planning the implementation of the conservation activities
	Technical study for a weir construction related to C2	Composition of a detail technical study for the construction of a weir	One technical study for a weir	
	Three Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)	Elaboration of three EIAs. One full EIA for the construction of the weir, two preliminary EIAs for Actions C1, C2	One full EIA, two preliminaries EIAs	
Provision of an essential tool to the competent authorities of Cyprus so as to manage properly and in a planned way the Koshi-Pallourokampos site	Delivery of a Management Plan for the Koshi-Pallourokampos site	One draft Management Plan One Final Management Plan approved by the SCo of DE	One draft Management Plan One Final approved Management Plan	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The plan will aid managers in future conservation efforts of the respective SPA
Gain information on the population size of the targeted bird species in the project sites	Completion of a technical report with a description of the project sites, of the targeted birds their favorable reference value for each species and their conservation status	One Technical Report	One Technical Report	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The report provided mandatory data for A.2 as well for the SDF revision of the 3 project SPAs
Improvement of the targeted bird species habitats in the project areas	Establishment of five traditional agricultural fields (2 at Kavo Gkreko, 2 at Koshi, 1 at Stavrovouni forest), for providing shelters for the targeted bird species of the areas	Five fields covering a total area of 5.000 m <sup>2</sup> – 15.000 m <sup>2</sup> . Each field will be fenced and will contain 1 water tank, 1 pond, 1 watering point, fruit and other trees and shrubs, herbaceous plants, 1 bird feeder	Five fields covering a total area of 8.285 m <sup>2</sup> .	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The fields will serve as havens for the avifauna, thus attracting more birds in the 3 SPAs as time goes by
	Improvement of water conditions for the targeted bird species of the project areas	Installation of 12 watering points at the targeted SPA areas	Installation of 17 watering points (7 at Kavo Gkreko, 7 at Koshi, 3 at Stavrovouni)	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The infrastructures will alleviate the negative effects on birds caused by drought as a result of climate change
Improvement of the targeted bird species habitats in the project areas		Establishment of two rain water collecting aprons	Establishment of two rain water collecting aprons at Koshi area	



		Weir construction along the main stream of Koshi site	Construction of one weir along a main stream of Koshi site (Avdellero area)	
	Improvement of nesting and food conditions for the targeted bird species of the project areas	Sowing of cereals-legumes on state forest land (8-10 locations of a total 20.000 m <sup>2</sup> area) & private owned land (1-2 fields of a total 10.000 m <sup>2</sup> area)	Sowing of cereal-legume fields on state forest land (10 fields of a total 27.500 m <sup>2</sup> area) & private owned land (2 fields of a total 12.000 m <sup>2</sup> area)	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The infrastructure will provide birds with forage free from chemicals commonly used in agriculture & nesting places, thus covering their fundamental needs
		Installation of 200 artificial bird nests at the project areas	Installation of 200 artificial bird nests at the project areas (90 Koshi, 60 Stavrovouni, 50 Kavo Gkreko)	
		Construction of a total 350 running meters of dry stone walls next to the agricultural fields and selected locations of the project areas	Construction of a total 399 running meters of dry stone walls next to the TAFs and the cereal-legume fields of the project areas	
Restoration of natural occurring habitat types in the three project areas	Removal of alien/exotic plant species in Kavo Gkreko and Koshi areas	3000 individuals at each site, covering a total area of 6 ha	Removal of 16.062 individuals of alien/exotic plant species at both sites, covering an area 9,67 ha	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Dense clusters with IAS were reclaimed for establishment of native habitat types via reforestations and natural regeneration
	Restoration of the native habitat types (5210, 5220*, 5330, 9320) through reforestations	Approximately 5000 plantlets will be planted covering a total area of 4 ha	5.380 plantlets have restored an area of 10,21 ha	
Contribute to limiting bird crime within the project areas	Discourage hunters from involving into bird crime activities	Reinforcing the patrolling of the project sites by preparing and carrying out an enhanced patrolling schedule	Delivery and carrying out of a patrolling schedule	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Preventive measures contributed to a significant decrease in bird crime incidents recorded within the 3 SPAs
		Limiting vehicular access of about 20km by installing heavy-type restriction bars	Limiting vehicular access of 13.5 km by installing chain linked restriction barriers	
		Installation of warning signs regarding illegal bird trapping	Installation of 25 warning signs regarding illegal bird trapping	

		Installation of IR cameras to record/monitor illegal bird activities	Installation of 18 cameras in the project areas. 15 cameras are left (3 were stolen)	
	Assessment of the problem of bird crime in the project areas	Delivery of two reports (initial on current situation, final regarding success rates and future measures / recommendations)	Both reports delivered	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Collateral activities that aided in planning anti-bird crime activities, dissemination activities, as well as accessing the results of the Action
		Delivery of an Action Plan with with suggestions to more specific measures and/or modifications and improvements to foreseen measures	Delivery of an Action Plan with additional suggested dissemination activities	
		Establishment of a CCo & evaluation of progress regarding bird crime mitigation through 7 meetings	7 CCo meetings held successfully	
		Production of a Communication Strategy Plan	Delivery of a Communication Strategy Plan	
Dissemination of project results to the wider public & enhancing awareness on the conservation of bird species	Production & dissemination of information material	2 leaflets (2000 copies) 2 Posters (2000 copies) 2 newsletters (3000 copies) 3 articles 4 info-kiosks 30 info-signs 1 Layman's report	4 leaflets (5.500 copies) 3 posters (1.500 copies) 2 newsletters (2500 copies) 7 articles 4 info-kiosks 30 info-signs 1 notebook (500 copies) 300 stickers 2 highway billboard posts 1 Layman's report (1.000 copies)	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Production of a high quality and of variance dissemination material and carrying out an effective multimedia awareness campaign that reached the wider public, stakeholders and many schools of the local communities
	Information and awareness campaign & dissemination of project results	6 broadcasts of TV spots 1 documentary 6 school lectures 4 bird watching competitions 6 school excursions Participation in 3 local festivals 2 stakeholder workshops 2 training events regarding forest fires 1 final-info day event 1 project website	6 broadcasts of TV spots Broadcasts of the TV spots on movie theaters nationwide 1 documentary 10 school lectures 4 bird competitions 6 school excursions Participation in 3 local festivals 2 stakeholder workshop 2 training events regarding forest fires 1 project website 1 facebook group 6 radio broadcasts	

			2 TV show hosting 2 poster participation to a congress	
Proper project management implementation and enhancement of the knowledge base for the protection and conservation of the targeted bird species and their forest habitats	Ensuring sound scientific standards of the project's implementation	Establishment of a SCo & realisation of 4 meetings	4 SCo meetings held successfully	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Consultation from profound experts regarding the project's progress throughout its implementation
	Networking with other similar projects & information exchange	2 abroad visits to similar projects (2 reports from the meetings)	2 abroad visits to similar LIFE projects 2 visits to local LIFE projects 3 visits from abroad projects (2 LIFE, 1 ERASMUS)	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Establishment of a knowledgebase regarding avifauna through networking PMT members with other experts
		Organisation of an Experts Workshop - Proceedings of the expert's workshop	Organisation of an Experts Workshop - Proceedings of the expert's workshop	
	Ensuring continuation of project implementation and results	Preparation of an After-LIFE conservation Plan	Delivery of an After-LIFE conservation Plan	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  The prescribed plan will aid project partners in future project efforts
	Project management & monitoring	Preparation of a Project Progress monitoring protocol & Project Management Guidelines	Project progress monitoring protocol & Project Management Guidelines delivered successfully	<u>ACHIEVED</u>  Sound management of project activities and finance throughout its duration

#### 5.4. Analysis of long-term benefits

LIFE-FORBIRDS is the second project completed, concerning bird species or SPA sites in Cyprus, and clearly contributed to a more effective management of the European Natura 2000 network and implementation of the provisions of the Birds Directive in Cyprus, as well as the national laws for the Protection and Management of Nature and Wildlife (N.153 (I)-2003) and for the Protection of Wild Birds and Game (N.152 (I)-2003).

Moreover, it served as a demonstration scheme for DF employees and Cypriot foresters, since it was the first project to put into practice, test, evaluate and disseminate actions/methodologies targeting the island's avifauna in such geographical extent, unfamiliar to the island's ecological and socio-economical context. Although implementation of measures favouring wildlife in general, and birds in particular, are clearly provided in the official document of Cyprus' Forest Policy, so far forest management in Cyprus, was concerned mainly with forest fires, forest recreation, conservation of flora and tree monuments, landscape, habitat types, soil protection etc., and no measures had been planned to conserve birdlife. It is dearly hoped that the approaches and practices employed during the project's implementation, will constitute best practice examples for the years to come. Up to now the outcomes are promising, since several conservation activities that favour avifauna have been replicated in other state forest areas (see **Annex: 7.1.1, pp.1**), as a result of the project's impact on local forest managers and officials way of thinking. The latter, involved in the stakeholder workshops, had to re-evaluate the forest practises of the last decades in terms of conservation and biodiversity efficiency. Related to the aforesaid practices that favour birds, a novelty of the project should be mentioned; i.e. the creation of the first weir for the avifauna of the island, which is also the first that DF constructed in its long history of operation (since 1879).

This project provided EU added value as it assisted the Republic of Cyprus towards fulfilling its obligation towards the implementation of Community policy and legislation on nature and biodiversity. More specifically, Directive 2009/147/EEC by enhancing the conservation status of 11 of its listed bird species, and Directive 92/43/EEC by the effective restoration at selected parts of five habitat types, including one of priority; i.e. Arborescent matorral with *Zyziphus* (5220\*), thus contributing to a higher resilience capacity of these local ecosystems to changing conditions. The project sites are already affected by climate change, and there is evidence that this change is more severe in south-eastern Cyprus where the project sites are located. LIFE-FORBIRDS addressed the main threats posed by the above scenario with selected conservation activities, thus enhancing the capacity of the three SPAs' local dry ecosystems to host successfully larger and healthier bird populations.

As with most LIFE projects, LIFE-FORBIRDS provided long-term social and economic benefits (direct and indirect) to the local communities through a public awareness campaign and participation of local communities in the conservation activities. Through this approach the project addressed various possible communication channels such as the internet, radio stations, television stations, movie theatres, newspapers, magazines, dissemination materials such as leaflets, posters, newsletters, promotional materials, billboards and communication activities such as environmental education events, workshops, networking, lecturing etc.

The campaign focused on presenting the conservation, as well as the aesthetic and economic value of the birdlife of Cyprus. The latter sadly has not been recognized yet, nor has been exploited in its full potential by the tourist sector of the island. Currently, only a small percentage of tourists visit the island for bird watching excursions. Since Cyprus is a major migration corridor for birds travelling from Africa and Asia to Europe and vice versa, the tourist industry with the aid of governmental authorities and the local communities could transform Cyprus into a bird watching hot-spot for the Levant. Instead, each year the island loses profit

from potential visitors that avoid Cyprus as holiday destination, as an act of opposition against the abhorrent bird trapping practices that are still being carried out by locals.

Since the very beginning, the project team put all its efforts to revert this negative image of the island by raising awareness about bird crime at schools of the project areas. The campaign targeted future hunters and poachers (hunting is the second most famous sport in the island), and established the foundation for a change in hunting morality, thus averting them from bird crime. In addition, the 60% reduction of bird crime incidents recorded in the project sites serves as an object lesson for the Republic of Cyprus, revealing a positive correlation between an increased patrol schedule and a decline in bird crime related incidents.

In general, the project achieved its goals in improving the conservation status of the avifauna of the 3 project SPAs, as well as on altering the mentality of the general public and involved stakeholders, in regards to the ecological and economical value of the birds of the island. Specific activities took place during the project's implementation timeframe and resulted in the following achievements:

- Mapping the IAS distribution in two SPAs of the island (CY6000009 & CY3000005).
- Elaborating a management plan for Koshi – Pallourokampos site for the first time.
- Elaborating a technical report that includes description of: the project sites, the targeted birds and their population sizes and FRVs, as well as main threats identified per site.
- Creating five TAFs within the project sites, which provided fresh water, nesting & resting places, and pesticide free food for all the bird species.
- Creating a multitude of infrastructures that increased the availability of water, food and nesting places for the avifauna of the project sites, namely, 12 cereal/legume fields, 17 water points, two water guzzlers, one weir, 15 dry stone walls, and 200 artificial nests.
- Restoring 10,21 hectares of natural occurring habitat types in two SPAs of the island by removing IAS and replanting native species.
- Improvement of the conservation status of several Annex I (Birds Directive) bird species in the three project sites, with a reflected increase of the number of nesting pairs of breeding species of up to 7,1%.
- Reduction by 60% of the bird crime related incidents recorded in the project sites, through strict enforcement of legislation, planned patrolling, and limiting access to trapping sites.
- Increasing public awareness in regards to the negative implications of bird trapping through an efficiently designed dissemination campaign. Special emphasis was given in reaching young children, thus establishing a change in mentality.
- Serving as a demonstration project for DF employees, in terms of incorporating conservation measures for the avifauna of forest habitats, and thus affected the current forest policy since many of LIFE-FORBIRDS' actions were replicated to other areas of the island.
- Establishing a knowledge base for developing in situ conservation measures that favor avifauna in lowland forest habitats through networking with other EU projects.

It should be also noted that although the concrete conservation actions of the project target specific bird species, the total avifauna that pass by or dwell within the three project SPA sites reaps the benefits associated with the improvement in food, water and nesting conditions. In addition, the infrastructures created by the project have a direct positive impact on the avifauna that will be magnified as time passes by. This is attributed to the types of the interventions carried out, requiring time in order to manifest their effects' potential; i.e. growth of fruit and forest trees/shrubs inside the TAFs, restoration of the natural occurring habitats by reforestation etc.

Lastly, the project implementation inaugurated a new era in the cooperation between the national competent authorities for the protection of the island's avifauna and forests; i.e. GFS and DF respectively. This collaboration was established through their active involvement in the project's actions, and will be safeguarded in the future via the efficiently designed follow-up actions of the "After-LIFE Plan". The Plan describes how all the beneficiaries plan to carry on and develop the activities initiated through this project, the responsible beneficiary per activity, an estimated cost and the implementation timeframe. The budget for each activity will be derived from the responsible beneficiary's resources, as agreed between the partners with the acceptance of the Plan. Thus, the continuation of the conservation endeavoring of the project will be assured for the years to come.

## 6. Comments on the financial report

The costs incurred during the whole project period (Oct 2014 – Dec 2017) of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project correspond to 94.7% of the total initial project budget, as presented in the table below, a percentage that in general corresponds to the technical completion of the project. Overall some noted deviations from budget have to do with reasons that have been flagged from the beginning of the project (i.e. higher personnel rates, lower requirements for travel expenses and savings in external services, durables and consumables) and justified again where needed here below. These deviations however did not have an impact on the technical completion of the project and furthermore lie within the €30,000 and 10% limits (as per LIFE 2013 Common Provisions) on changes to the provisional project budget foreseen in one or more categories of expenditure. Moreover, during the final detailed review of all expenses, some corrections were made, mainly on more accurate calculations of the personnel cost, especially with respect to the employer contributions, which had a relatively small downward effect on amounts previously reported. These corrections however, were deemed necessary for a more accurate reflection of the actual project expenses. The project expenditure are also in compliance with the 2% rule for public bodies, since the own contribution of the two public bodies in the project (DF & GFS) significantly exceeds the staff cost of public employees (permanent or with contracts before the start of the project). The total personnel cost of the public beneficiaries that falls under this category was €240,143 and the total own contribution of these beneficiaries is more than €400k.

All required financial statements, as per the LIFE model financial statement for LIFE 13 projects, can be found as Annexes (# 7.4) and on the CD provided with the current report.

### 6.1. Summary of Costs Incurred

The costs incurred so far are presented in the following table (also submitted in Excel format i.e. **Summary of costs**, Table 4):

**Table 2:** Costs incurred in the project from the beginning until 31/12/2017

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED			
Cost category	Budget according to the grant agreement*	Costs incurred within the project duration	% **
1. Personnel	413,990	420,855.90	101.7%
2. Travel	29,508	22,369.69	75.8%
3. External assistance	204,600	196,577.61	96.1%
4. Durables: total <u>non-depreciated</u> cost			
- <i>Infrastructure sub-tot.</i>	133,500	122,059.26	91.4%
- <i>Equipment sub-tot.</i>	84,560	73,991.38	87.5%
- <i>Prototypes sub-tot.</i>	0	0.00	0.0%
5. Consumables	14,342	8,575.44	59.8%
6. Other costs	34,190	33,919.45	99.2%
7. Overheads	64,028	60,622.01	94.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>978,718</b>	<b>938,970.74</b>	<b>94.7%</b>

\*) If the Commission has officially approved a budget modification indicate the breakdown of the revised budget. Otherwise this should be the budget in the original grant agreement.

\*\*) Calculate the percentages by budget lines: e.g. the % of the budgeted personnel costs that were actually incurred

Based on the above table the following observations can be made on each category:

### **Comments:**

#### **- Personnel Cost.**

Overall, all beneficiaries have activated the necessary resources for the implementation of the project and as explained in the IR some additional staff (with respect to the original proposal) had to be deployed. (From IR: Even though the project proposal assumed the implementation of the project by three Foresters and two Laborers on behalf of DF, in practice additional personnel had to be utilized. This is attributed to the fact that staff from both DF's central offices as well as three local DF forest stations (one for each project site) need to take part in the various project actions. Furthermore, depending on the personnel's other required activities and taking into account that several of them are seasonal employees under contract, some of these support personnel change from time to time). It should be noted that the use of additional personnel does not entail the use of more work time for the project as a whole.

Even though per beneficiary there were some deviations in terms of personnel budget utilization (higher cost for DF and lower for the rest beneficiaries), as observed from Table 4 above, the overall budget utilization for this category is only marginally higher than the budget (101.7%). This to an extent reflects also the fact that the measures taken to handle the issue flagged since the IR and addressed in the previous reports and communication with the EC (Annex 7.2.6 of the MR) regarding the higher actual personnel rates vs the wrongly budgeted lower ones, have been effective.

Also as requested by the response letter of EC [Ref. Ares(2016)6932759 - 13/12/2016], the attached **Annex 7.1.1**, provides explanations on how the beneficiaries calculate the annual gross salaries of their staff using exemplary documentation for one employee per beneficiary.

Some further minor notes on the personnel cost are the following:

**DF:** Overall DF expensed ~30% more than its budget in personnel cost, mostly in conservation actions C.1-C.3 which required more effort for successful completion as described in section 5 above. However, as indicated here above, this over budget cost was more than covered by savings in other cost categories as well as savings in personnel cost of other beneficiaries.

**GFS:** Despite some overspending in actions A.3 and F.1, justified in the MR, overall savings (~24%) were recorded in the personnel cost for GFS, mainly for Actions C.4 and E.1 where evidently the GFS budget was somewhat overestimated.

**CFA:** After the approval of the PMT, some time was charged in actions C.1 and C.2 where the beneficiary had no budget. This was deemed necessary for CFA to assist with the implementation of the Actions, because of the extra workload that was required to be done by DF in a small amount of time and taking advantage of CFA's staff past experience with these activities. The absolute value of this time charge is relatively small (~€1800) and overall CFA had savings in personnel cost at the end of the project.



**FU:** Additional experts not originally foreseen, were included in the beneficiary's team for the elaboration of the study for Action D.2 as described in section 5 above. Their contribution was deemed necessary in order to provide input and feedback regarding the surveys and the study in general, which would be carried out for the action. Their total cost in absolute value was ~€10700 but was covered by savings in other actions and it did not affect the overall budget of the beneficiary which also had savings in personnel cost at the end of the project.

#### **- Travel & Subsistence Costs**

As anticipated in the MR, the budget implementation for the Travel category at the end of the project produced some savings of ~24%.

As far as changes and minor re-allocations of budget expenses, it is only worth noting again that GFS had to spend more on travel expenses for site visits in A.3 as explained in the MR, and in F.1 due to the fact that project coordination/ management meetings mostly took place in Nicosia, which required the responsible person(s) to travel from another city for these meetings. Also, a small amount for side visits travel cost not originally budgeted for in C.2 was charged by CFA, for the reasons explained in Personnel Cost deviations above.

Finally, an amount from the travel costs of FU was be used for acquiring external services for telephone surveys for Action D.2 (as already communicated to EC through email correspondence in August 2016). The amount transferred from the travel cost category was approximately €4500.

#### **- External Assistance Cost**

As indicated in the summary of costs table above, the budget implementation of the External Assistance category stands at 96.1% which is close to the overall budget utilization for the project. Some savings were noted under this cost category especially for the budgeted services under C and F actions due to lower prices received from the followed tendering procedures. These were mediated to a degree by the corresponding addition in D.2 indicated above in Personnel cost

As far as deviations from budget, Action E.1 envisaged the installation of 30 info-signs near selected infrastructure created by the project. Although for this activity DF was the responsible beneficiary, the cost under the "External Assistance" category for the installation of the signs was allocated to CFA in the budget. Thus, a mistake was made by the Conservation Officer of the project (DF employee) who inadvertently forwarded the payment for the construction of the signs to DF's accounting. Therefore the specific cost has been accounted under DF's expenses and a corresponding budget transfer was made for this amount from CFA to DF. Also, the relatively small cost that was budgeted under personnel cost of CFA for laborers was moved to external assistance at the request of the external auditor since the two hired workers were not employed under a normal Labour contract, despite the fact that they were under the direct supervision of a CFA staff.

Furthermore, the PMT has decided to perform extra or complementary activities mainly for conservation and dissemination actions deemed necessary for improving the impact of the project results as explained in detail in the corresponding paragraphs of section 5 of the FR above. These activities resulted in expenses not foreseen in the original budget mainly for DF and to a smaller degree for CFA, which however were covered by savings in the cost of other external assistance budgeted items, thus the overall budget utilization in this category remained below 100%. Some notable examples, in terms of absolute cost value, of these extra activities are the "dry wall construction at Avdelero, Koshi SPA" for action C1 and the "design, printing, installation and 3 months renting of highway billboard signs" for action E1.

**- Durables:**

- **Infrastructure:** The foreseen infrastructure work, mainly for the conservation actions have been completed with some deviations described in the corresponding paragraphs of section 5 above. As anticipated in the MR, despite the additional Infrastructure work decided by the PMT and executed, due to the state of the local economy at the time, the overall budget utilization for this cost category remained at 91.4%.
- **Equipment:** The budgeted equipment was purchased with 87.5% of the total budget used due to savings from the tendering procedures followed by DF and GFS. Some changes in the actual required purchases relative to the budgeted ones have been justified in the IR and considered reasonable as per the EC response letter [Ref. Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015]. For completeness, the justification for those changes as included in the IR are copied here below as well:

Department of Forests:

For the needs of Action C.3 (see Technical Part #5.1.6), in the submitted proposal it was stated that DF would acquire two chainsaws. However due to the findings of A.1 (see Technical Part #5.1.1) that indicated an extensive area covered by invasive species at Koshi – Pallourokamos site, a decision by the PMT was taken for acquiring an additional chainsaw for this action. The extra cost for the 3rd chainsaw was covered by savings in other equipment purchases (e.g. 4x4 vehicle).

In the submitted proposal it was also stated that for the needs of Action A.1 (see Technical Part #5.1.1) a desktop pc would be purchased. However, due to the extensive field work required by A.1 a decision to acquire an extra laptop was taken by the PMT in order to assist the field personnel in mapping, inventorying etc. This laptop after the completion of A1 will be used in the dissemination activities of the project that DF is involved to, namely training events on forest fires and website updating. Again the extra cost for this laptop was covered by savings in other equipment purchases (e.g. PC, CFAs laptop).

A decision to acquire a projector accompanied with a projector screen was also taken by the PMT in order to be used in the dissemination, and networking activities of the project that DF or other POs will be involved to, namely awareness workshops, training events on forest fires, final info-day and expert's workshop. The extra cost for this was covered by savings in other equipment purchases (e.g. 4x4 vehicle).

In addition, a ring flash was acquired by DF in addition to the zoom lens. The decision was taken by the PMT, and it is justified by the fact that in order to take pictures inside the birds' nests (artificial or natural), so as to monitor nesting and hatching, the use of bright light is needed, and a regular camera flash is not adequate for such work. Furthermore, a set of new camera batteries has been acquired for greater autonomy and extended hours of work during field work expeditions. The batteries cost was included under the consumables category. In any case, the total actual cost for the lens, the ring flash and the camera batteries was less than the budgeted value of the lens alone.

Finally, for the needs of D.1 and specifically for monitoring birds using the TAFs and the rest infrastructures; i.e. cereal-legume fields, waterers etc., the PMT decided that the purchase of 4 sets of binoculars and 3 IR cameras along with their memory cards was deemed necessary. This is attributed to the fact that additional evidence data of the bird's presence needed to complement the 2017 census report of the ornithologist, since the latter covered a different timeframe with less birds present at the SPAs. The pictures taken

were used also in the Conservation Monitoring Report of the project. Moreover, the specific equipment will allow DF to monitor efficiently the usage of infrastructures from the birds during the After-LIFE period.

#### Game and Fauna Service:

In the proposal it was inferred by mistake that different cameras would be needed for Actions C4 (10 IR cameras for €5000) and D1 (5 cameras for €5000). In reality the camera specifications required for both actions are the same; all cameras must be motion-censored, with IR-capability in order to take night photos without a flash. Given the offers received, the cost of the cameras was such that it was decided to buy 18 instead of 15 that were stated in the proposal, since in the process it was decided that there will be a need for several monitoring spots to adequately cover the 3 sites (2 of which are relatively large). Overall, the cost of the cameras was lower than the lowest estimated budget per camera (€500 each), so there was a saving in funds allocated for their acquisition.

Furthermore, 2 Global Positioning System (GPS) devices were bought instead of one for Action A3 since the Game & Fauna Service has 2 teams working on the project, one stationed in the city of Larnaca and the other in the city of Limassol. It was therefore more practical to acquire 2 devices, so both teams could have their own and work independently. Again the actual cost for the two GPS devices was lower than the corresponding budget line, thus resulting in further budget savings.

#### **- Consumables:**

The Consumables reached a budget utilization of 59.8% and the Other costs a level of 99.2%, yielding relatively small savings in absolute values of ~€6k in total. No significant deviations have been observed in these cost categories beyond some small changes indicated in previous reports.

#### **- Other Costs:**

Overheads are calculated as a flat rate 7% of the eligible expenses for each beneficiary. This means for DF an amount corresponding to cost of purchasing plantlets from DF's plants nursery (€12,320 – Other cost) was excluded from the calculation to avoid the prospect of profit generation for the beneficiary. See also relevant comments on section 6.4 below "Auditor's Report/declaration".

Overall, the unavoidable deviations in actual costs between categories or between actions remained within reasonable limits and small deficiencies in some categories or actions were covered by savings in other categories/actions without a significant effect on the total cost of the project and certainly without an effect on the maximum EC requested contribution. The final requested EC contribution is actually lower than budgeted by about €20k.

## **6.2. Accounting system**

As outlined in the Financial Management Guide [revised as requested by Ares(2015)3984730 - 28/09/2015 – see *MR: Annex 7.2.8*] that has been developed at the start of the project (see *IR: Annex 7.5.5*), each beneficiary records all expenses related to the project in their accounting systems in a manner that a sufficient and clear audit trail can be ensured. For all expenses, original supporting documents (including timesheets) are properly filed and kept with the

accounting office of each beneficiary, whereas copies of them are filed in a separate Financial Folder that is kept for each beneficiary. These financial folders, which belong to the Coordinating Beneficiary, follow a standardized filing content to facilitate the review and correspondence with the financial reports. As indicated in the Financial Checklist form of each beneficiary, project expenses are recorded in the following the accounting codes used by each beneficiary:

1. **DF**-Department of Forests: Chapter 71 of the DF Budget - Projects co-funded by EU funds – accounting article no. 03.71.525 –“Participation in Projects and Initiatives”. Each cost receives a reference number and assigned to the project it belongs to.
2. **GFS**-Game and Fauna Service – as with DF the corresponding accounting article used is no. 50510012 (used for all EU projects).
3. **CFA**-Cyprus Forests Association Accounting Code for the project: CFA-176
4. **FU**-Frederick University: Accounting Code 1156

Even though each beneficiary may follow a slightly different procedure for approving costs, depending on the value of the expenditure, in principle expenses are requested by personnel assigned to the project, they are reviewed and approved by the beneficiary coordinators as per their necessity for the project and finally authorised and executed as per budget availability by the finance/accounting director of each beneficiary. Where restricted or open tender procedures need to be followed a tender evaluation committee reviews the offers received and decides on the best value or most economic option.

From the beginning of the project, each beneficiary received from the PFM a template excel file that was created based on the template LIFE+ timesheet with calendar months until the end of the project. All files generated using this template were revised when the template of the LIFE+ projects changed in 2015 to incorporate the changes. Instructions for completing the timesheets were provided both in writing and at the 1st meeting of the Financial Management Team. Person-hours are recorded for the present project and other LIFE/EU projects, as well as the balance hours for the remaining activities of each personnel member such that all hours worked for the organisation are accounted for. After the end of each month, the timesheets are printed, signed by the corresponding personnel member and approved/signed by the corresponding beneficiary coordinator, supervisor or authorised representative.

For calculation of the personnel cost rates the annual employer cost is used divided by the total productive hours of the year as per the timesheets for each person. However, for staff that works for the project only for a limited time, mainly temporary workers, only the productive hours for the months that are involved in the project and the corresponding salaries cost for those months is used to calculate their rates.

Regarding travel expenses, the Cyprus government rules and internal regulations of beneficiaries are followed, as communicated to the external monitoring team through the Financial Checklist files. Especially for traveling within Cyprus that corresponds to the majority of the project travel costs the following are followed:

*Use of Project/public beneficiaries Cars of DF or GFS:* This is recommended when possible for all beneficiaries' staff members working on the project. For public vehicles, the fuel rates are being announced monthly through the e-Procurement System (e-PS). The rates that are announced do not include VAT (currently 19%), so a calculation is made in order to find the actual fuel rate. Finally, according to the vehicle used, two different fuel rates are used for calculation: One that corresponds to the fuel rate when the refill occurs directly at local gas stations and a second one when the refill occurs at a filling station owned by the DF or GFS

(usually at local Forest Stations). Each month the logbooks of the vehicles involved in project activities are being copied and filed. They include data regarding the date the vehicle was used, the starting point and the destination, the vehicles mean consumption (litres/100 km), the distance travelled (km) for project's purposes, and the driver's name. These data along with the fuel rate are used in order to calculate the total fuel cost per trip.

*Use of Private Cars* (mainly applicable to FU and CFA): The policy which is used in the public sector (Cyprus Government) is adopted, which allows for compensation with a fixed amount/km travelled which is set by circulars of the Ministry of Finance for trips away from the headquarters. Details of the above policies are included in the project Financial Folder of each beneficiary.

As per the LIFE+ common provisions and the guidelines incorporated in the Financial Management Guide, all invoices produced by suppliers for the project must have the project acronym and code (LIFE-FORBIRDS, LIFE13 NAT/CY/000176) printed on them. In the event this did not happen at the initial production of the invoice by the supplier, as purchases especially for small amounts were made by various people, the original invoice was stamped with the project credentials, or those credentials were hand written on the invoice before they were submitted to the accounting office of the corresponding beneficiary for payment.

### 6.3. Partnership arrangements

The signed Partnership Agreement between the beneficiaries (submitted to the EC with the IR see *IR: Annex 7.1*) provides for a specific schedule for financial transactions between the CB and the ABs that takes into account the financial requirements of the beneficiaries that stem from the implementation of the project. The agreement also incorporates clauses to allow for changes in the aforementioned payments schedule, based on the actual project progress and the eligibility of expenses of the beneficiaries.

As indicated in the IR, a Financial Management Team has been formed, headed by the PFM (Alexis Onoufriou – FU) and representatives of each partner (Konstantinos Dimitrakopoulos – DF, Andreas Lysandrou – GFS, Costantinos Pericleous – CFA, and Constantinos Kounnamas – FU) with duties on monitoring, collecting, properly filing and reporting information to the PFM that reviews them in terms of validity and consolidates them into the required reports. In practice, each beneficiary enters their own information in the financial reports and every three or four months these are provided to the PFM as interim internal financial reports. It should be noted here that the financial reports are based on the LIFE+ template “Standard Statement of Expenditure” with a slight modification to record the relevant Action for each expense item. The PFM reviews them against the supporting documents provided (financial folders) and if necessary corrective measures are suggested to each beneficiary. The review includes the following:

- Ensuring that declared costs are sufficiently verified with appropriate documentation
- Ensuring that costs are relevant to the project.
- Communicating with the PM to ensure that the beneficiaries conformed to their work and deliverable requirements and that declared costs correspond to the work undertaken.
- Integration of individual cost statements and checks to ensure that total costs do not significantly exceed the foreseen budget and that the LIFE+ funding rules are observed.

The PFM then reported to the coordinating beneficiary on the findings and the consolidated state of budget implementation and made suggestions on financial planning aspects of the project.

#### 6.4. Auditor's report/declaration

An accounting firm was selected in September 2016 for auditing the project following public tender procedure by the CB. The details of the accounting firm that has been selected are:

Name: HMI & Partners LTD

Company registration number: HE 197348

VAT number: 10197348U

Address: Stasicratous 22, P.O. Box: 1065, Tel.: +357 22 028232

Auditor's official registration number: E122/G/2013

For the avoidance of excessive load that will accumulate for the required final audit report, an internal-interim audit report was scheduled for the end of April 2017 that covered the expenses incurred up to Dec 2016. This provided an additional feedback mechanism for identification of potential problem areas before the end of the project, thus allowing time for corrective measures.

The final auditor's report is attached to this report as **Annex 7.4.2**

It should be noted that the financial statements of expenditure provided with the final report do not account the notes of the auditor on the potential non-eligibility of some expenses. Therefore, the total cost incurred and corresponding calculated EC contribution are included in these statements as provided to the auditor.

Furthermore, with regards to the comments raised by the auditor on the non-eligibility of some expenses, it should be noted that:

- The VAT on two invoices of €95 (total €190) in relation to the external service costs of FU towards the end of the project has been actually paid on 2/4/18 before the submission of this FR and should be considered as eligible cost after all. The delay in payment is attributed to the VAT reporting periods and corresponding payments of the tax to the government.
- The Financial Management Team (FMT) of the project in the submitted financial report deducted the overheads for DF only on amounts that correspond to purchases from DF's Plant Nursery and not for purchases from other government departments as the external auditor did. It is therefore requested that the project's FMT position is adopted by the EC instead of the auditor's one, as overhead expenses of other departments, which have different budgets, cannot raise concerns of profit generation if charged by DF.

#### 6.5. Summary of costs per action

The table below presents an allocation of the costs incurred per action (also presented in Excel format i.e. **LFB - Summary of costs per action-Table 3**).

In reference to the final cost allocation per action, here below corresponding justification is provided for actions with relatively notable deviations, in absolute and relative terms, from the proposed budget:

The cost of **Action C.3** exceeded the budget by €39,794 (37%). The reasons for the deviation in Action C.3 stem from the justifiable higher cost recoded by DF because of the following:

- More hours were used by DF personnel due to the extensive removals of IAS and exotic species in both Kavro Gkreko and Koshi – Pallourokampos SPAs. The results of A.1 revealed dense clusters of IAS at the two sites that the project consequently targeted for removal. The control method is a tedious procedure that needs to be carried out in a specific manner in order to yield results (each plant stem must be treated individually with herbicide, and one *Acacia saligna* plant can have as many as 10 stems).
- Much higher cost in external services for the reforestation needs due to expensive rates at the hiring of diggers. The soil in Kavro Gkreko is particularly hard so the pits were open using a drill that costs more for hiring. In addition, watering costs were higher due to the increased watering frequency of the reforestations. This was deemed necessary so as to avoid reforestation failures, due to the extreme dry summers that occurred during the 3 years of the project implementation.

Moreover, the installation of the restriction barriers had an extra cost that burden this category (see below)

- Infrastructure costs occurred that were not original envisaged in the budget due to the decision of the PMT to install restriction barriers at a specific location of Kavro Gkreko SPA (Somera area), where extensive degradation of the 5210 habitat type had occurred. The barriers will prevent further fragmentation of the habitat and the reforestations of the project will cover up the patches. This decision was discussed with, and approved from the EC team during the respective project visit on July 2017.

The cost for **Action D.2** was higher by €6,380 (39%) from the original budget attributed solely to the additional cost incurred by FU, noted in section 6.1 above. As previously indicted, it was evident from the monitoring team's reviews and the EC's comments that this action was not adequately described and planned for in the proposal to meet the expectations of the EC and the LIFE program requirements. Therefore extra resources were needed in additional qualified staff as well as external services for telephone surveys to satisfactorily elaborate the socioeconomic study and the ecosystem services study for the three different project areas.

Other smaller deviations were recorded as well in most actions, which were deemed necessary and reasonable for the successful implementation of the project, or were caused by changes in the actual values of budgeted expenses. Some of the important changes in these budgeted values have been justified in section #6.1 above.

**Table 3:** Costs incurred in the project per action from the beginning until 31/12/2017.

Action no.	Short name of action	1. Personnel	2. Travel and subsistence	3. External assistance	4.a Infra-structure	4.b Equipment	4.c Prototype	5. Purchase or lease of land	6. Consumables	7. Other costs	TOTAL
A1	Mapping of targeted locations and technical specifications.	34,091	1,450	5,500	0	25,355	0	0	0	1,660	68,056
A2	Preparation of a management plan	24,571	251	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,822
A3	Assessment of bird population size	16,971	3,054	0	0	24,160	0	0	138	0	44,323
C1	Creation of traditional agricultural fields	52,428	1,425	10,880	76,893	4,000	0	0	1,641	10,251	157,517
C2	Improvement of water, food and nesting conditions.	26,511	938	29,521	27,069	2,085	0	0	3,156	1,597	90,876
C3	Removal of alien plant species and restoration of indigenous vegetation	68,676	1,566	51,822	6,604	2,009	0	0	1,022	14,913	146,612
C4	Combating bird crime in the project areas	49,118	4,188	4,436	9,373	4,272	0	0	23	404	71,813
D1	Monitoring of the impact of concrete conservation actions	5,808	191	4,757	0	9,522	0	0	354	0	20,631
D2	Monitoring of the impact on socio-economic aspects and ecosystem functions	19,818	0	4,522	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,340
E1	Information and awareness campaign	23,502	2,013	23,888	2,121	1,933	0	0	789	4,703	58,949
E2	Website development and operation	7,792	0	2,261	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,053
E3	Layman's report	3,127	0	1,663	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,790
F1	Project coordination, management and monitoring.	73,416	1,962	49,220	0	656	0	0	0	391	125,644
F2	Scientific Committee	8,032	255	5,897	0	0	0	0	855	0	15,039
F3	Networking with other LIFE and/or non-LIFE projects	6,993	5,080	2,212	0	0	0	0	599	0	14,884
F4	Stakeholder Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Overheads	29,460	1,566	13,760	8,544	5,179	0	0	600	1,512	60,622
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450,316</b>	<b>23,936</b>	<b>210,338</b>	<b>130,603</b>	<b>79,171</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,176</b>	<b>35,431</b>	<b>938,971</b>



## **7. Annexes**

### **7.1. Administrative Annexes**

**Annex 7.1.1: Letters from the Commission and Response to the Comments**

**Annex 7.1.2: Personnel List**

**Annex 7.1.3: Key Meetings and Events**

**Annex 7.1.4: Gantt Chart of LIFE-FORBIRDS**

**Annex 7.1.5: Milestones of the Project**

**Annex 7.1.6: Deliverables of the Project**

### **7.2. Technical Annexes**

#### **7.2.1. Deliverables**

**Annex 7.2.1.1: After-LIFE Conservation Plan\_gr (Action F.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.2: After-LIFE Conservation Plan\_en (Action F.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.3: Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee meeting (Action F.2)**

**Annex 7.2.1.4: Report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Visit to other LIFE Projects (Action F.3)**

**Annex 7.2.1.5: Expert Workshop Proceedings (Action F.3)**

**Annex 7.2.1.6: 3 Maps of Actions C (rev.02-2017) (Action A.1)**

**Annex 7.2.1.7: Updated Draft Management Plan (Action A.2)**

**Annex 7.2.1.8 Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting (Action C.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.9: Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting (Action C.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.10: Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> CCo Meeting (Action C.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.11: Action Plan on Bird Crime (Action C.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.12: Final Report on Bird Crime (Action C.4)**

**Annex 7.2.1.13: Final Study on Socioeconomic Aspects and Ecosystem Functions (Action D.2)**

#### **7.2.2. Other**

**Annex 7.2.2.1: Photobook**

**Annex 7.2.2.2: Approval of A.2 Management Plan**

**Annex 7.2.2.3: Report on the Weir Completion**

**Annex 7.2.2.4: Disposal of Dead Acacias at Green Points**

**Annex 7.2.2.5: 4<sup>th</sup> Visit Activity Report of Expert on IAS**

**Annex 7.2.2.6: Ornithological Census Report of the 3 SPAs 2017**

**Annex 7.2.2.7: Report on the Artificial Nests 2017**

**Annex 7.2.2.8: Conservation Monitoring Report**

### **7.3. Dissemination Annexes**

#### **7.3.1. Deliverables**

**Annex 7.3.1.1: Documentary on Birds (Action E.1)**

**Annex 7.3.1.2: Articles of the Project (Action E.1)**

**Annex 7.3.1.3: 2<sup>nd</sup> Presentation for School Lectures (Action E.1)**

**Annex 7.3.1.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter (Action E.1)**

**Annex 7.3.1.5: Layman's Report\_en (Action E.3)**

**Annex 7.3.1.6: Layman's Report\_gr (Action E.3)**

### **7.3.2. Other**

**Annex 7.3.2.1: Leaflet about Bird Crime**

**Annex 7.3.2.2: KCineplex Invoice**

**Annex 7.3.2.3: Bird Watching Leaflets**

**Annex 7.3.2.4: 2<sup>nd</sup> Stakeholder Workshop**

**Annex 7.3.2.5: 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Event on Fire Fighting**

**Annex 7.3.2.6: Final Info Day**

**Annex 7.3.2.7: Mailed Leaflet**

**Annex 7.3.2.8: Website Traffic Analytics**

### **7.4. Financial Annexes**

**Annex 7.4.1: 1<sup>st</sup> Report of External Auditor**

**Annex 7.4.2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Report of External Auditor**

**Annex 7.4.3: Financial Statements of the Individual Beneficiary (DF, GFS, FU, CFA)**

**Annex 7.4.4: Standard Payment Request and Beneficiary's Certificate (DF)**

**Annex 7.4.5: Beneficiaries' Certificate for Nature Projects (DF, GFS, CFA)**

**Annex 7.4.6: Consolidated Cost Statement for the Project**

### **7.5 Project Output Indicator Tables**

**Annex 7.5.1: Nature Output Indicators**

**Annex 7.5.2: Awareness Raising Output Indicators**