

ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strengthening Natura 2000 implementation in Slovenia – Communication support to implementation of Natura 2000 (Publication reference: 2006/S 55-057662)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Beneficiary country

Slovenia.

1.2. Contracting Authority

Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia.

1.3. Relevant country background

Slovenia is characterised by rich biodiversity in a rather small territory situated between the Alps, the Dinaric Mountains, the Pannonian plain and the Mediterranean. The review of habitats shows that all the basic categories are extremely rich: coastal and marine types, inland waters, scrub and grasslands, forests, bogs, fens and marshes, barren land (rocky habitats, scree, dunes, caves) as well as agricultural and urbanised landscapes. According to the available data, there are 22,000 registered plant and animal species in Slovenia. However, it is estimated that the actual number is between 50,000 and 120,000. The degree of endemism is considerably high in comparison to the smallness of the area.

For more information see the review of the Status of species and habitats, published in "Biological and Landscape Diversity in Slovenia - an Overview" (Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning - Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, 2001, 262 pp, pdf, link: www.gov.si/mop/en/publikacije/ostalo.htm).

Biodiversity is considered a priority issue during the Slovenian Presidency in 2008. Slovenia, as a Member State of the EU and the Contracting Party to the CBD, should strive towards achieving the 2010 target of halting the biodiversity loss by 2010 (EU target) or at least reducing its loss (CBD and WSSD target). The Ministry is interested in achieving the 2010 target at the national level.

1.4. Current state of affairs in the relevant sector

1.4.1 National/local policies and strategies and/or economic data for the sector or institutional area:

Natura 2000 is a European network of sites aimed at preserving rare and endangered species and habitats, according to the Birds and Habitats Directives.

Slovenian Government has adopted the Natura 2000 network in April 2004, as part of pre-accession obligations. According to Habitats Directive, 260 sites (pSCI) were designated (32% of land area). According to Birds Directive, 26 sites (SPA) were designated (23 % of surface area)¹. With 36% of the surface area in Natura 2000 sites, Slovenia is among countries with the highest percentage in Europe.

Maps and lists of Natura 2000 sites (in Slovene) are available at: www.natura2000.gov.si/obmocja.htm.

¹ See the official site www.natura2000.gov.si.

The Government of Slovenia adopted the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy in Slovenia in December 2001. It was published in 2002 (79 pp, Slovenian/English) and is available as pdf at: www.gov.si/mop/publikacije/drugo/biotska.pdf. It defines ten-year objectives and directions for activities with a significant impact on the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and sustainable development. Regarding raising public awareness and communicating with the public, the objective is “to increase the number of environmentally aware interest groups which understand the importance of biodiversity and are familiar with the activities that conserve, or potentially threaten, biodiversity”. The strategy foresees an action plan, which is currently under preparation.

The National Environmental Action Plan 2005-2012 was adopted by the Parliament in November 2005. It is available (70 pages, in Slovenian language) at www.uradni-list.si/1/ulonline.jsp?urlid=20062&dhid=80228. One of the measures foreseen in the plan is “Education and awareness rising of pupils and the public on the importance of biodiversity, with an emphasis on Natura 2000 network”.

To reach a favourable status of species and habitat types in Natura 2000 sites, the Nature Conservation Act foresees an operation plan for, which is currently under preparation.

1.4.2. Present organisational structures, institutions

At the national level the nature and biodiversity conservation is the responsibility of the National Assembly, the Government, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Environmental Agency, the Institute for Nature Conservation and the institutes responsible for the management of protected areas.

The Ministry (Nature Conservation Sector) formulates decisions, implements the nature conservation policy and harmonises the intersectoral projects and strategies which have an impact on the nature conservation. The Environmental Agency (Nature Conservation Department) is a body of the Ministry. It primarily keeps nature conservation registers; issues permits and consents with regard to nature conservation.

The Institute for Nature Conservation and its 7 regional branch units has been conferred powers to issue environmental protection consents and guidelines, to keep the register of valuable natural features and the records and data bases in compliance with the law, to guarantee the uniformity of methods and procedures, to implement the technical supervision and direct control of the designated areas and to grant consents in the procedure for obtaining consent for legal transactions on the real-estate located in protected areas.

Protected areas are managed by institutes established by the state (4 areas), an institute established by a municipality and by several concessionaires.

An overview of institutions is presented in the Assessment of implementation of the Convention on biological diversity in Slovenia (REC, 2006, pdf, 85 pp) at http://www.rec-lj.si/projekti/NCSA/Dokumenti/CBD_TP_web.pdf.

Among non-governmental organisations in the field of nature conservation, DOPPS-Birdlife is the strongest.

1.4.3 Project Natura 2000 (February 2003 – May 2004)

To carry out the designation process, two teams of experts were defined by the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning in February 2003. A team of experts in nature conservation prepared proposals of sites to be designated.

The communication team's task was to deliver basic information on Natura 2000 and proposed sites to key stakeholders on national and local level. The team was composed of 80 persons, from National Institute for Nature Conservation, Slovenian Forestry Service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber, and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (including Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia).

Communication at the national level was carried out mostly by the PR unit of the Ministry (letters, press releases, press conferences, website www.natura2000.gov.si, electronic bulletin for team members etc.). Also, communication at the local level was co-ordinated by the Ministry.

Majority of communication was carried out at the local level, by the so-called communication groups (a network of communicators). These were formed for Natura 2000 sites individually, usually 4-5 members, at least one from each of three organisations (National Institute for Nature Conservation, Slovenian Forestry Service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber). Members of the communication team developed their communication skills through training and advisory service provided by a team of experts, contracted by the Ministry. Communication of individual sites was carried according to the plan, developed for individual sites by the communication group and was almost exclusively direct, oriented at key stakeholders for each site. (see: Natura 2000 Final Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy, 34 pp, pdf at: www.natura2000.gov.si/projektivec/final_report.pdf).

Once the sites have been designated, a new communication strategy was drafted by the Ministry.

In 2005, communication at the national level was focused mainly on the website and an electronic bulletin eNatura (published twice a month, distributed to 500 addresses – government officials, NGO's, experts, municipalities etc.). The co-ordination of communication at the local level was transferred to the National Institute for Nature Conservation. The Institute's activities in the post-designation period were primarily personal communication to representatives of municipalities and other key stakeholders. Several expositions for general public were prepared. Personal communication was supported by agricultural advisors from Agricultural and Forestry Chamber.

Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning co-financed communication activities of non-governmental organisations. In 2004, 19 projects were co-financed, in 2005 further 15 projects (eg. awareness raising on protection of bats among clergymen, several public presentations, lectures, foldouts, nature trails).

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities:

The Phare project CBC SLO/HU SI00.08001 "Joint Nature Park Development" included some communication elements related to Natura 2000. The project was focused on the proposed park area. In the period of project implementation, the scientific information on Natura 2000 was incomplete, therefore the communication on Natura 2000 was

very general and was mainly focused on promoting the benefits of the future (now already established) park.

The Phare CBC Slovenia-Austria 2003 “Biodiversity conservation and sustainable development” grant scheme supports several communication activities at the local level, primarily public awareness campaigns related to individual Natura 2000 sites and several information centres. See: www.gov.si/mop/podrocja/uradzaokolje_sektorvarstvonarave/projekti/phare.htm (in Slovene).

NATURA 2000 in Slovenia - management models and information system is a project, co-financed by LIFE Nature (LIFE04NAT/SI/000240). As part of the project, the beneficiary - Institute for Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia - is carrying out an information and awareness raising national campaign, including setting up a Natura 2000 information system and the organization of numerous workshops, both at the local and national level. See: http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/infoproducts/lifenatcompilation_04.pdf.

Other LIFE projects (past and present) in Slovenia comprise public awareness activities, oriented to the specific sites or species and do not overlap with activities of this project.

The pilot action “Natura 2000 site in the area of Kočevje municipality” was carried out under the umbrella of the Interreg CADSES IPAM-Toolbox project and in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy, Kočevje municipality, Forest Institute of Slovenia and Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (Zavod RS za varstvo narave). The project raised visibility of the Natura 2000 in the pilot action area and broader on the Kočevsko – Kolpa site.

The project “Natura 2000 and EU – A new opportunity for you” was carried out by DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia, MME – BirdLife Hungary and ČSO – BirdLife Czech Republic in the period April 2005- April 2006. It was financed by EC – DG Enlargement. Activities comprised publication of a brochure and poster, a press conference, communication to local decision makers, youth, countryside population and business.

2. CONTRACT OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objectives

The draft Strategy for Communication of Natura 2000 (2005 – 2007), prepared by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, places biodiversity conservation among key development opportunities of Slovenia. It has foreseen communication objectives aimed at enhancing general public awareness and participation in nature conservation and paying special attention to the key target groups (key stakeholders) aimed at acquiring their trust and support in managing of Natura 2000 sites.

2.2. Specific objectives

The purpose of this project is to support enhancing general public and key stakeholders’ awareness and to support the implementation of Natura 2000, to provide know-how for the preparation of future communication strategy for the next three years, to enable increased participation of the selected communicators in the implementation of the second phase of the Natura 2000 communication strategy.

The specific objectives of the project are as follows:

Objective 1: General visibility of the Natura 2000 ecological network;

Objective 2: Placing biodiversity conservation among the key development opportunities of Slovenia.

Objective 3: Equipped and qualified network of communicators;

Objective 4: Readiness of stakeholders to participate in maintaining biodiversity conservation within the Natura 2000 sites.

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Consultant

- increased awareness and acceptance of biodiversity and more specifically Natura 2000 among general public and specifically among key stakeholders (positive attitude towards nature protection);
- enhanced willingness of landowners and authorities that manage land and natural resources in Natura 2000 sites to co-operate in sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites
- improved capacity of the network of communicators to communicate effectively with key stakeholders.

By the end of the training, the Consultant should elaborate a handbook on skills, techniques and tools in the field of communication, negotiation, participative planning and team work, applicable to each of the beneficiaries.

The results should support the implementation of Natura 2000 network in Slovenia.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project intervention

- No major dissatisfaction on local level. All participants /employees of partner institutions (Institute for Nature Conservation, Forestry service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber) are willing to take part in activities.
- No mayor negative publicity regarding Natura 2000 on national level.
- Participation of all institutions involved.

3.2. Risks

- There is a slight risk of being unable to ensure the full involvement of key responsible institutional bodies (National institute for Nature Conservation, Slovenian Forestry Service, and Agricultural and Forestry Chamber).

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Project description

The project is aimed at achieving active interest of the general public and increasing the current level of stakeholder involvement. It is intended to give additional momentum to the communication process, launched in 2003.

It will ensure that the present activities in the field of communicating Natura 2000 in Slovenia are given support through consultation, training and planning; additionally, the activities will be reinforced by communication to the general public through a communications campaign, thus achieving:

- general visibility of the Natura 2000 ecological network;
- placing biodiversity conservation among the key development opportunities of Slovenia;
- equipped and qualified network of communicators;
- readiness of stakeholders to participate in maintaining biodiversity conservation within the Natura 2000 sites.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

Slovenia.

4.1.3. Target groups

The draft Strategy for Communication of Natura 2000 (2005-2007) defines the **target groups** as follows:

- Primary stakeholders:

- employees of the Ministry and partner institutions (Institute for Nature Conservation, Forestry service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber)
- land-owners in Natura 2000 sites
- other Ministries, the Parliament
- municipalities
- general public.

- Secondary stakeholders:

- professional organisations,
- media,
- environmental and nature conservation NGO's.

Other stakeholders will be identified by the Consultant, as part of preparation of the communications campaign strategy.

4.2. Specific activities

The activities of the project will correspond directly to the specific objectives of the project.

To reach Objective 1 *General visibility of the Natura 2000 ecological network among general public*, the following activities are expected:

- Survey on general public's attitude regarding Natura 2000;
- Preparation of presentation of good management practices within the national Natura 2000 sites;
- Preparation of communications campaign strategy;
- Preparation of the communications campaign action plan (it should include 4 press releases and a press conference);
- Implementation of the communications campaign action plan;
- Proposing measures for achieving the sustainability of communication at the national level;
- Drawing up proposals for upgrading the website www.natura2000.gov.si;
- Assessment of communications campaign effectiveness;
- Consulting and working with Contracting Authority's communication team.

It is suggested that good practice would be an example of management or acceptance by local population. It is also suggested that creative solutions are oriented strongly towards the topic "living with Natura 2000".

To reach Objective 2 *Placing biodiversity conservation among the key development opportunities of Slovenia* the following activities are expected:

- Interviews with key stakeholders;
- Preparation of communications strategy for addressing representatives of legislative and executive authorities;
- Preparation of the communication action plan to be implemented by the Contracting Authority;
- Consulting the Contracting Authority during the implementation of communication action plan;

To reach Objective 3 *Equipped and qualified network of communicators* the following activities are expected:

- Identification of communicators' needs concerning skills and promotional material;
- Develop the training programme and elaborate a hand-book (negotiation; crisis communication, public appearance, participative planning, team work, facilitation);
- Drawing up a manual on frequently asked Questions & Answers regarding Natura 2000;
- Training of communicators (training workshops);
- Drawing up proposals for upgrading the eNatura Newsletter for purposes of communicating Natura 2000 to all interested parties;
- Drawing up proposals on techniques for encouraging stakeholders to participate in Natura 2000 site management;
- Drawing up a promotional package for communicating Natura 2000.

Communicators are professionals employed at the National institute for Nature Conservation, Slovenian Forestry Service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber, and park authorities. Majority of them were trained in certain communication skills in 2004 (see: Natura 2000 Final Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy, 34 pp, pdf at: www.natura2000.gov.si/projektivec/final_report.pdf). Additionally, NGOs already active in communicating Natura 2000 would be trained. The Contracting Authority will provide the list of trainees. In total approx. 130 persons should be trained.

Activities listed above would also help reaching Objective 4: *Readiness of stakeholders to participate in maintaining biodiversity conservation within the Natura 2000 sites*. To assess the effectiveness of the project, a survey of readiness of stakeholders to participate should be carried out.

All plans, strategies, research results, training materials and promotional packages should be in Slovenian language. Training should be carried out in Slovenian language, except in special cases, agreed by the Contracting Authority.

Copyright for all publications, for the training programme and for the training materials with the right to use the materials for any subsequent training will be given to the Contracting Authority.

A kick-off meeting will be organized in Ljubljana within two weeks after the contract is signed. All key experts that will work on this project will be required to participate.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

4.3.2. Management structure

The Contracting Authority will delegate a project manager who will be responsible to follow the implementation of the project activities according to the Terms of Reference.

A Steering Committee will be nominated by the Contracting Authority and will consist of representatives of beneficiary institutions (National institute for Nature Conservation, Slovenian Forestry Service, Agricultural and Forestry Chamber, and park authorities) and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. A member from the Government Office for European Affairs (GOEA) and a member from the Ministry of Finance - CFCU will be nominated as observers.

The main functions of the Steering Committee include joint discussions on any critical points or bottlenecks affecting further project implementation, joint decisions regarding project implementation, and discussions and approval of the Consultant's reports (see Section 7). The project manager will be responsible for co-ordination and informing the Steering Committee members.

The Consultant will be responsible for contract performance, financing, expenditure and reports.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

Facilities have to be provided by the Consultant.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

Ljubljana is recommended, Slovenia is obligatory.

5.2. Commencement date & Period of execution

The intended commencement date is August 2006 and the period of the execution of the contract is 13 months. Please refer to Articles 4 and 5 of the Special Conditions for the actual commencement date and period of execution.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Personnel

6.1.1. Key experts

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

Key expert 1: Team Leader – Communication in the field of Nature Conservation/Environment*Qualifications and skills*

- University degree.
- Specialisation in communication or marketing.
- Fluent in English and Slovenian, oral and written.

General professional experience

- At least 7 years of experience in managing communication and/or media campaign projects.
- proven team leading experience.

Specific professional experience

- experience in developing communication/media campaign projects for governmental bodies or public authorities
- experience in consulting governmental bodies or public authorities, preferably in multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral work.

Key expert 2: Expert in communication training*Qualifications and skills*

- University degree,
- Fluent in English and Slovenian, oral and written.

General professional experience

- At least 5 years experience in communication training.

Specific professional experience

- preferably experience in training for governmental bodies or public authorities
- preferably experience in training in communication skills in the field of biodiversity conservation
- preferably experience in training multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral groups of trainees.

Key expert 3: Expert in surveys on public attitudes*Qualifications and skills*

- University degree,
- Fluent in English and Slovenian, oral and written.

General professional experience

- At least 5 years experience in surveys on public attitudes,
- at least 2 years: position of project manager or main/chief/senior researcher.

Specific professional experience

- experience in evaluation or measuring social awareness campaign effects.

6.1.2. Other experts

CVs for experts other than the key experts are not examined prior to the signature of the contract. They should not have been included in tenders.

The Consultant shall select and hire other experts as required according to the profiles identified in the Organisation & Methodology and/or these Terms of Reference. These profiles must indicate whether they are to be regarded as long-term/short-term, international/local and senior/junior. For the purposes of this contract, international experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is outside the beneficiary country while local experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is in the beneficiary country.

The Consultant should pay attention to the need to ensure the active participation of local professional skills where available, or a suitable mix of international and local staff in the project teams. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities accorded to them.

The selection procedures used by the Consultant to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel shall be recorded. The selection of experts shall be subject to approval by the Contracting Authority.

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the beneficiary country cannot be recruited as experts.

6.1.3. Support staff & backstopping

Support staff and backstopping is defined, organised and managed by the Consultant.

The Consultant has to reserve funds for additional translators/interpreters.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation of a reasonable standard and of approximately 10 square metres for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Consultant.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Consultant

The Consultant shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support its activities under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

The Consultant shall provide the necessary technical and administrative facilities to fulfil the requirements of the Terms of Reference and to provide administrative and logistical support to the project activities, including translation services, whenever necessary. All costs related to the preparation, translation (from English to Slovenian) and printing of training materials, rent of venue (for the training facility) and interpretation during training, shall be covered by the consultant. The experts are expected to use their own computers and mobile phones.

If the Consultant is a consortium, the arrangements should allow for the maximum flexibility in project implementation. Arrangements offering each consortium partner a fixed percentage of the work to be undertaken under the contract should be avoided.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority / beneficiary country as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority / beneficiary country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the beneficiary country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

Please refer to Article 26 of the General Conditions. Interim progress reports must be prepared as follows:

Inception Report	3 months
1 st Interim Report	6 months
2 nd Interim Report	9 months

The **inception report**, prepared within 3 months from the commencement date stated in the contract, should include a detailed work plan and, if necessary, a revised Logical Framework. It should be based on the results of the survey on general public's attitude regarding Natura 2000 and on the identification of communicators needs concerning skills and promotional material (required in Section 4.2.).

The **interim progress reports**, should include:

- A comparison of achievements against planned activities and overall progress against the initial timetable;
- A review of problems encountered during implementation of project activities and the corrective measures taken;
- A detailed work plan for the following period and any interim findings or preliminary conclusions.

There must be a final progress report and final invoice at the end of the period of execution. The draft final progress report must be submitted at least one month before the end of the period of execution of the contract. Note that these interim and final progress reports are additional to any required in Section 4.2 of these Terms of Reference.

The final progress report should include:

- A complete overview of all the activities implemented during the project;
- A summary of outputs, and the identification of any major problems, which may have arisen during the performance of the contract; and
- An assessment of the impact of the project measured against the stated project objectives and the indicators of achievement included in the log-frame matrix.

7.2. Submission & approval of progress reports

Reports with Annexes should be submitted in English and Slovenian language and also in the electronic version.

Seven (7) copies should be submitted to the Project Manager identified in the contract.

Project Manager is responsible for the approval of all reports. Each report has to be presented, discussed and approved also by the Steering Committee. Expected time frame for checking and approval of the reports is within four weeks from the receipt of the report.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project will be monitored in accordance with standard procedures (external monitoring during the inception phase, periodic monitoring and final assessment). Project monitoring and evaluation will be based upon periodic assessment of the progress of the delivery of specified project results against their targets, and the achievements of the project objectives.

8.1. Definition of indicators

The indicators against which the project will be monitored are related to quality and timely completion of the activities listed in Section 4.2.

8.2. Special requirements

None.