

LIFE Project Number
LIFE+08/INF/UK/214

Inception Report
Covering the project activities from 01/01/2010 to 31/08/2010

Reporting Date
30/09/2010

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
**Promoting the importance of the EU Birds Directive in
conservation management on farmland**

Data Project

Project location	UK
Project start date:	01/01/2010
Project end date:	31/12/2012
Total budget	€ 1,692,547
EC contribution:	€ 846,273
(%) of eligible costs	50%

Data Beneficiary

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2. List of abbreviations

AES	Agri-environment scheme
CFE	Campaign for the Farmed Environment
Farmer(s)	Refers to farmer(s) and crofter(s)
GIS	Geographical information system
ha	Hectare
NoFA	Nature of Farming Award
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
V&FA	Volunteer & Farmer Alliance

3. Executive summary

3.1. General progress

The project objectives are:

- To engage directly with at least 3,540 farmers through on-farm bird surveys, a network of demonstration farms and a Biodiversity Award scheme, in order to raise awareness of the EU Birds Directive and promote positive land management.
- To engage at least 7,040 members of the general public directly in project delivery, through the delivery of the surveys and engagement in the award scheme.
- To create a positive profile for the EU Birds Directive among participating farmers and members of their local communities, as well as more widely among farmers and the public, through promotional activities. Specifically: (1) to engage with more than 120,000 farmers annually through promotional and media activities and media; and (2) to engage with more than 3 million members of the general public annually through targeted media work highlighting the importance of protecting both rare and widespread farmland birds in accordance with the Birds Directive.

To date, we have engaged directly with 683 farmers through bird surveys, 134 farmers through the Biodiversity Award and 1,019 farmers at workshops held at demonstration farms. In addition, we have corresponded with over 1,900 farmers through the farming e-newsletter and 3,600 farmers will receive the project newsletter in December. We have engaged directly with 6,342 members of the general public through the vote for the Nature of Farming Award and 836 through volunteering for the bird surveys. Our media coverage on the project to specialist agricultural press has appeared in both of the two main farming media: *Farmers Weekly* (190,000 readers) and *Farmers Guardian* (52,000 readers).

General media coverage of the project appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* (c.840,000 readers) and the RSPB 'Birds' magazine (2.1 million readers), as well as a long list of regional and specialist papers and both national and regional television and radio, as detailed in this report.

The key actions planned for the first nine months of the project were

- to set up the project across 11 regions of the UK and monitor progress (A1 and A2)
- identify farmers and trained volunteers for the bird surveys and carry out these surveys (B1, C1 and C5)
- promote entry into the Biodiversity Award, select the finalists and promote the public vote to select the national winner (C8)
- produce the bird guide for farmers (C10)
- set up the project website (F1)
- produce information boards (F2)
- media promotion of the project (F5)
- attend technical events to promote the project and RSPB advice (F7).

These actions were all completed on time with the exception of the project website and the information boards. The project website is scheduled to be worked up by November. The

delay was due to prolonged discussions about how best to profile the project on the internet, and scheduling the work with the web designers. In the interim, the host site has links to the various project elements and the EU logo, a reference to funding from the EU LIFE+, and a link to the EU LIFE+ website has been added. The production of the information boards (F2), has been delayed due to the decision to tailor these boards to profile key habitats on demonstration farms. We are now scheduled to complete production of these by the end of December 2010.

New Project Officers were recruited in East Scotland, North Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales to complete the project staff for all 11 regions of the project. A project steering group was set up and meets every six months.

In addition, the outputs of the bird surveys have been worked up and will be sent to the farmers before Christmas (C2) and follow-up visits to farms will happen on the back of this (C3). Regional advisers have already exceeded the target number of farm visits for 2010 through giving advice to farmers on the basis of known bird records. Some regions have started the farmer workshops (C4) and setting up demonstration farms and case studies (C7). Five of the regions have held farmer workshops and three have published farm case studies. All 11 regions will have set up a demonstration farm by the end of Year 1, although north Scotland are not looking to run a farmer event, as experience has shown that these are not well attended in this region: they have focused more attention on farm visits and will publish case studies of demonstration farms. Stock for the advisory packs has been produced (C9) and this will go out with the outputs of the bird surveys before Christmas.

3.2. Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable

The project objectives and work plan definitely remain viable. We exceeded our original targets for Year 1 in terms of numbers of bird surveys (683) and public votes for the Biodiversity Award (6,342). We have also already reached, and will exceed the Year 1 target for number of farms visited and management reports written up (117 visits advising on 36,191ha have already been completed). The majority of these have entered agri-environment schemes to undertake the environmental work as advised by the RSPB Regional Adviser.

Numbers of volunteers attending the volunteer workshops was lower than estimated (437) despite running more than three times as many workshops as intended (34). This was because many of the volunteers were already experienced bird surveyors and did not require training. If we retain a high proportion of volunteers in future years, then demand for these workshops might drop further.

3.3. Problems encountered

The main problem encountered has been in setting up the project website. We had initially planned to host the project website on www.farmwildlife.info. However, information about the bird surveys, Biodiversity Award and our Regional Adviser network were more relevant to the RSPB website, and it would gain more interest here. So we have set up an interim project home page at www.rspb.org.uk/farming. In November, a dedicated EU LIFE+ project website will be set up with a link from this page to all of the project's work and outputs.

We had a very successful presence at Cereals 2010, the technical event for arable farmers in the UK, with demonstration plots of key habitats to benefit declining farmland bird

species. However, the industry partner who hosted our demonstration area in 2010 is changing its focus away from environmental work in 2011. We have attracted interest from the Crop Protection Association to work with us in future years, but it is looking unlikely that they will have time to plan the development of demonstration plots in time for 2011. We are looking at alternative means of hosting a demonstration element at the 2011 event.

4. Administrative part

4.1. Description of project management

Monthly one to one meetings take place between the EU LIFE+ Project Manager and Senior Agricultural Adviser to review project progress. A detailed annual appraisal also takes place.

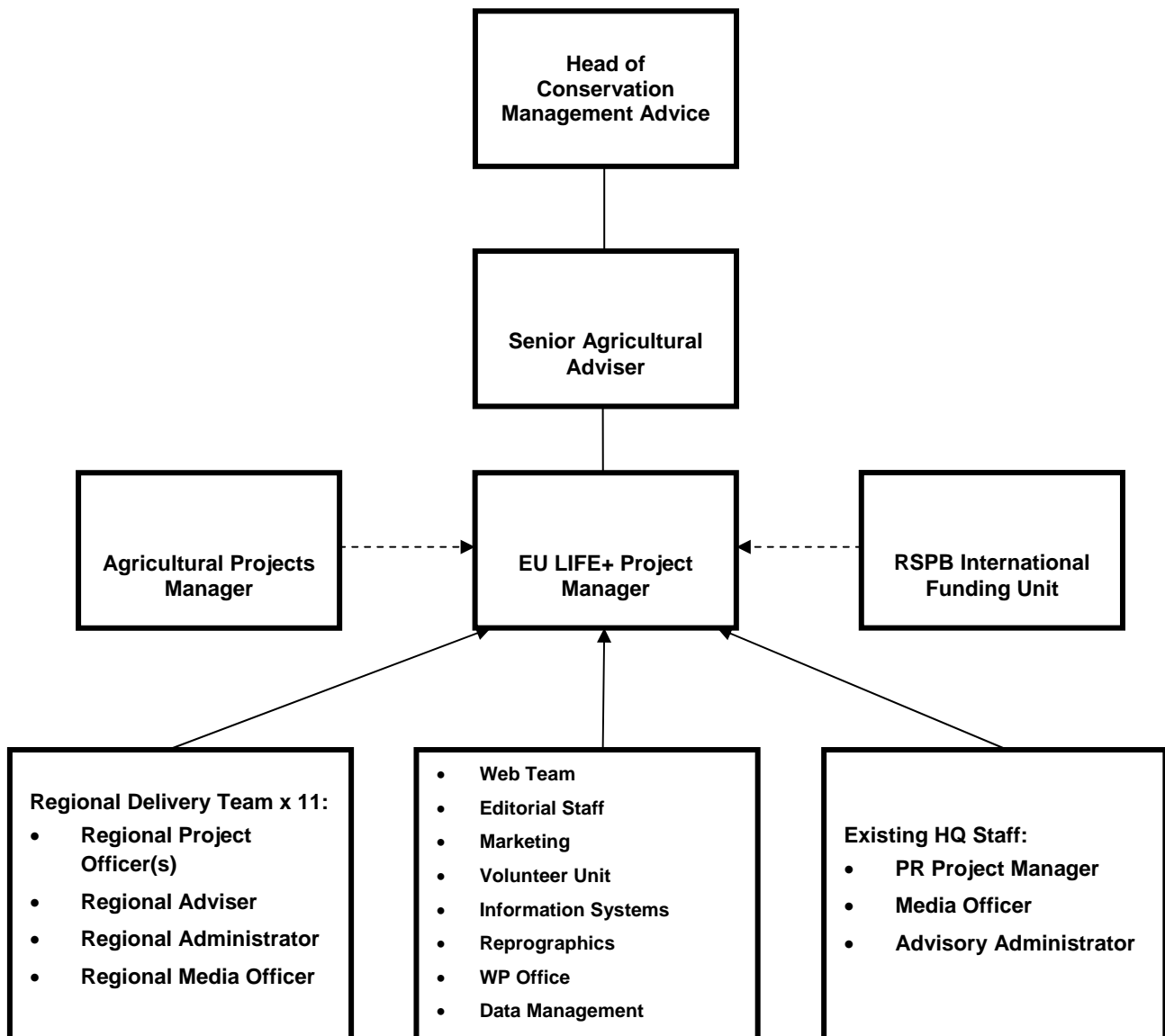
Every 6 weeks, an Agricultural Communications Group meets. This retains a strategic overview of agricultural communications and public relations.

A LIFE+ Project Steering Group meets bi-annually, to review the project budget and progress.

The UK Steering Group also meets every 6 months and involves all the project staff and those from elsewhere with the RSPB, which contribute to project delivery.

The Regional Delivery Teams regularly liaise with and report to the EU LIFE+ Project Manager and staff from the LIFE+ Project Steering Group, who visit Regional Delivery Teams as required.

4.2. Organogram showing the key components of the project management structure



4.3. Partnership agreements status (incl. date of signature) and key content

These are not relevant.

5. Technical part

5.1 Project Actions

Action A1: Manage project

A robust management framework for the project has been established. The EU LIFE+ Project Manager is based at the RSPB's Headquarters and is responsible for the delivery of the project. She reports to the Senior Agricultural Adviser routinely, with monthly one to one meetings and a detailed annual appraisal formally scheduled.

We have established a LIFE+ Project Steering Group, which includes the Head of Conservation Management Advice, Senior Agricultural Adviser, EU LIFE+ Project Manager, Agricultural Project Manager and staff from the International Funding Unit. This group meets every 6 months with minutes and action points drawn up.

The UK Steering Group also meets twice a year and includes the above, plus key representatives from Regional Delivery Teams and staff from other HQ departments, including Volunteer, Media and Data Management Units. Again, minutes and action points are made available.

An Agricultural Communications Group meets every 6 weeks. In addition to the conservation staff in the LIFE+ Project Steering Group, it also includes the Farmland Project Manager, Agricultural Policy Officer, PR Project Manager and Media Officer. Action points are distributed after each meeting.

During November and December 2009, a recruitment drive employed Project Officers in East Scotland, North Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. There are 11 established Regional Delivery Teams, which comprise of Project Officers, Farmland Bird Advisers, Media Officers and Administrators. These teams regularly liaise with and report to the EU LIFE+ Project Manager. In addition, staff from the LIFE+ Project Steering Group, visit the Regional Delivery Teams as required.

The organogram on page 8 summarises the management structure of the project. See Annex 1 for minutes of the LIFE+ Project Steering Group and Annex 2 for minutes of UK Steering Group.

Action A2: Monitor project progress

The progress of the project is assessed using the timetable and milestones set out in the project guidelines, on a monthly basis through meetings between the EU LIFE+ Project Manager and Senior Agricultural Adviser, six monthly through the steering groups and annually through staff appraisals.

The EU LIFE+ Project Manager maintains an overview of project actions through frequent and detailed communications with each Regional Delivery Team. Equally, the EU LIFE+ Project Manager has routine contact with her line manager, which (as noted above) is in addition to formally scheduled meetings.

Action A3: External audit

This is planned for 2013.

Action A4: After-LIFE plan

This is planned for 2013.

Action B1: Identify farmers and volunteers

A range of materials, including country specific versions of leaflets have been produced in advance of this year's surveys. These were used to promote the project to both farmers and volunteers. See Annex 3.

Where there was an additional requirement to recruit more farmers and/or volunteers, a press release was sent out to publicise the project. Each would have been targeted, depending on the need or demand for participants. For example, more volunteers were needed in the East of England to meet the demand for surveys from farmers, whilst more farmers were needed in Wales. See Annex 4.

A wide range of media outlets, including local and regional newspapers and specialist agricultural media were successful in publicising the project to farmers. In addition we made use of the RSPB's extensive internal mechanisms including the network of local RSPB groups, website and BIRDS magazine. All were highly effective in attracting volunteers and farmers to the project.

Having expressed an interest in having a survey undertaken, the farmers were sent a registration form and asked to return it with a map of the farm, specifically identifying which 80ha they would like surveyed. This is a maximum area that a volunteer can effectively survey in a morning.

This map allowed the appropriate GIS software to be prepared and a suitably placed volunteer to be tentatively matched to the farm to undertake the survey. An RSPB database is also used to record the details of the farmers involved.

These computer programmes and the data entered ensure compliance with data protection legislation and efficient administration.

Alongside this process, volunteers were identified and sent a registration form. When this is returned, the information is committed to another RSPB database designed to assist volunteer management and comply with data protection legislation.

Action C1: Carry out farm surveys

The Project Officers and Regional Delivery Teams attracted interest from 1,008 farmers, requesting surveys in advance of the breeding season this year. See the table opposite.

	No. requests for surveys	No. surveys delivered
South-west England	100	94
South-east England	78	54
East of England	165	92
England Midlands	143	77
North-west England	76	51
North-east England	132	80
East Scotland	47	47
South and West Scotland	65	57
North Scotland	60	28
Northern Ireland	84	67
Wales	58	36
Total	1,008	683

Project staff liaised with farmers to ensure their co-operation and so deliver time-bound surveys. Because communication with farmers can prove frustrating within conventional hours, we have found it is much more cost-effective to do this by post unless the farmer initiates communication by another means.

Having secured the necessary commitment and received the associated paperwork from the farmer, it is agreed with the farmer that the survey will be undertaken providing a local volunteer can be found.

Alongside the farmer recruitment and registration process, 836 volunteers committed to undertaking surveys. See the table overleaf.

	No. of survey volunteers	No. of admin. volunteers
South-west England	108	2
South-east England	64	1
East of England	117	6
England Midlands	103	-
North-west England	66	1
North-east England	130	-
East Scotland	52	-
South and West Scotland	60	-
North Scotland	23	-
Northern Ireland	71	2
Wales	42	-
Total	836	12

After Project Officers have received the necessary paperwork from each volunteer, all the volunteers are invited to workshops to determine if they are happy to undertake the surveys, have the requisite skills to do the work, and are physically capable and conversant with the procedures involved. We are fortunate to have many volunteers with the requisite bird identification skills, resulting in the workshops only having to concentrate on the procedural aspects of the surveys and raising awareness of their role in the wider project.

Having established all this and their availability, there is the need to match the volunteers with the farms, ensuring a close proximity between the volunteer's home and the farm. The farmer is advised of who might undertake the survey and unless the Project Officer hears anything to the contrary, the farmer's personal details are given to each volunteer, who is asked to contact the farmer and arrange an initial visit.

With this established, a participation pack is disseminated to each volunteer, which informs the volunteer of their ambassadorial role and gives detailed information on matters such as health and safety, survey methodology and feedback mechanisms. See Annex 5. This pack is available both electronically, and in hard copy and distributed according to the volunteer's preference. However, maps and recording sheets have to be printed and posted to the volunteer.

If Project Officers are unable to provide some farmers with surveys or utilise some volunteers, each party is dutifully informed, with a view to involving them the following year.

During 2010, a total of 683 surveys were undertaken across the UK. This exceeds the target of 680 surveys. The tables above illustrate the distribution of surveys across regions and countries and also illustrate the number of volunteers involved in survey work.

Each survey consists of an initial visit to meet the farmer and then 3 or 4 survey visits. A little way into the breeding season, the Project Officers contacted the volunteers involved to ensure good progress was being made with the surveys, check the quality of the surveys and that the volunteers were happy in their work.

Action C2: Deliver survey outputs to farmers

The survey results have been arriving with Project Officers since June and have been analysed and amalgamated into detailed territory maps for species of high conservation concern. Because the participation packs explain how this analysis is done, volunteers often start it themselves. Some Project Officers also have the assistance of administrative volunteers during this and other peak periods. See the table above.

The final analysis is always undertaken by the Project Officer in advance of data entry using GIS software.

With this territorial analysis of the results from each farm survey undertaken, the data entry complete and the layout of the map finalised, the A3 map will be printed 3 or possibly 4 times.

A copy is kept by Project Officers, a copy for the EU LIFE+ Project Manager and a copy for the farmer which is laminated. If the volunteer involved has the capacity to receive an electronic version, this is preferable to printing a fourth copy which would not be laminated anyway.

The species of birds found during the survey that are not of conservation concern, are not included in the data entry or represented on the map that is sent to the farmer. However, their presence is noted on a table that lists all the species of birds found on the farm and it is this list that forms part of the report that is sent to the farmer with the laminated map. This report includes supporting material that puts the results of the survey into context.

This package of results and materials will have been produced and received by farmers by the end of the calendar year.

Action C3: Carry out follow-up advisory visits

Demand for, and completion of, advisory visits has been regionally variable but all are on track to meet the annual target of 10 advisory visits per region. The UK target of 110 advisory visits has already been exceeded. In regions not included in the pilot project to provide bird surveys in 2009, advisory visits have been made to farms in areas known to have important farmland bird assemblages. Follow-up visits to farms that had bird surveys in 2010 will begin in January 2011.

Farm size, and hence total area advised over is also regionally variable, with a tendency for smaller farms in the west (including Wales and Northern Ireland) and larger farms in the East of England, with some very large estates in upland areas (including Northern Scotland). To date, 117 farm visits have been completed and advice has been given over 36,191ha. It is estimated that 159 farm visits will have been completed and advice given over 47,223ha by

the end of the year. This is far in excess of the target. The Regional Advisers produce reports for the farmers they visit, covering the following aspects:

- List of birds and other notable wildlife species recorded on the farm
- The habitats required for these species
- Estimate of how much habitat is required
- Specific details of how options should be located and managed

Progress to date is:

Region/country	Number of farm visits completed (in progress)	Area (ha) of farmland covered (in progress)
Northern Ireland	10	601
North Scotland	26	10,974
East Scotland	11	3,825
South and West Scotland	8(15)	1,587(1,543)
Wales	10	286
North-west England	9(10)	2,489(2,394)
North-east England	8(2)	3,256(842)
England Midlands	13	2,530
East of England	4(12)	1,643(4,548)
South-east England	8(3)	5,003(1,705)
South-west England	10	3,997
Total	117(42)	36,191(11,032)

Action C4: Run workshops for farmers

Workshops for farmers are planned to run through the winter of 2010 in each region except North Scotland, where experience has shown farmer events are poorly attended due to travelling distances involved. The focus here is put purely on advisory visits, with a total of 26 farms (10,974ha) being brought into agri-environment scheme agreements in 2010 (see the table above).

In addition, several farms advised by the RSPB have been nominated as Beacon Farms for the Campaign for the Farmed Environment and RSPB staff have already led events explaining the decline of farmland birds and conservation measures that farmers can take to halt the declines. Although these events were not arranged by project staff, they are used to promote the V&FA bird surveys and disseminate key messages about the conservation of farmland birds. This has enabled project staff to disseminate information at more events and to more farmers than anticipated.

Workshops for farmers run to date are:

Region/country	Number of farm workshops	Number of farmers attending
South and West Scotland	7	510
North-west England	1	10
England Midlands	8(+ 4 CFE)	130(+194 CFE)
East of England	2	100
South-east England	3	75
Total	21 (+ 4 CFE)	825(+194 CFE)

As arable farmers are busy harvesting and drilling between July and October, many of the remaining events will be held after this, with an aim to complete them by the end of March 2011. This is three months behind schedule, because it is more difficult to attract farmers to events in the summer and early autumn. We will aim to deliver these workshops in October-December in future years.

Action C5: Run workshops for volunteer surveyors

In advance of the breeding season, 37 volunteer workshops were held across the UK attracting a total of 437 volunteers. See the table below.

	No. of volunteer workshops	No. at workshops
South-west England	6	40
South-east England	-	-
East of England	3	49
England Midlands	1	17
North-west England	3	16
North-east England	3	62
East Scotland	4	15
South and West Scotland	6	123
North Scotland	3	22
Northern Ireland	4	60
Wales	4	33
Total	37	437

The number of volunteers in attendance at these events was lower in the regions and countries where the pilot project ran because volunteers had previous experience and therefore the number of attendees was lower than expected. In one region, no events were run because only a few new volunteers were involved this year and they were trained up individually.

Even a reasonable level of retention of volunteers in future years might mean that the number attending workshops each year remains low.

The workshops were held indoors with a trip outside incorporated into the event to explain the survey methodology.

The events prove invaluable because they offer an interactive opportunity to explain exactly how surveys are undertaken; the methodology involved, health and safety procedures and raise awareness of the importance of the project in improving management for farmland birds of conservation concern.

For example, in Wales the events were held on either a Saturday or Sunday at different RSPB reserves, Carmarthen Botanical Gardens and a church hall. They involved a reception with refreshments, a presentation on the project itself, health and safety procedures, survey methodology, timetables, submission of maps and lists, result collation and expenses claims. An element of bird identification was incorporated into proceedings. Then everyone went for a walk locally, conducting a mock survey with questions and answers along the way. Lunch was provided by in-house catering facilities or a local caterer and allowed further opportunities to ask questions.

In South West England and the East of England, the day of the week varied to suit the volunteers. All the events were held on the farms involved in the project, with several utilising the facilities available and often, the farmers provided refreshments. See Annex 6.

Action C7: Establish demonstration farm network

Demonstration farms are being established across the UK with a view to holding events for farmers (Action C4) and volunteers (Action C5) and to develop case studies which can be posted on the RSPB website and Farm Wildlife website (Action F1). These are farms which have undertaken management to benefit wildlife in accordance with RSPB advice and have the facilities to host farm events to demonstrate techniques to other farmers. A demonstration farm is profiled in each of the farming e-newsletters: a new section of the quarterly e-newsletter entitled Agri-environment heroes has already featured three demonstration farms this year. See Annex 7.

The aim of these case studies is to showcase best practice in both compliance with EU legislation and enhancement of the conservation status of key species through habitat creation and management.

All regions will have set up a demonstration farm and prepared a case study as scheduled, by the end of 2010.

Action C8: Establish a Biodiversity Award scheme

The rationale behind establishing a Biodiversity Award scheme is that it gives farmers the opportunity to gain widespread recognition and praise for conservation on their farms, raises

awareness and provides an excellent vehicle for more general communications. In doing so, we aim to raise the profile of wildlife-friendly farming within the industry, and encourage more farmers to aspire to be Agri-environment heroes by managing their farmland to improve the conservation status of farmland birds and other wildlife, in accordance with the EU Birds Directive.

As intended, 10,000 sign-up leaflets were produced to promote the NoFA. This involved producing a leaflet for each country involved, with a bi-lingual version for use in Wales. See Annex 8.

In conjunction with a press release, these leaflets were distributed through various routes into the farming community. See Annex 9. All farmers involved in the V&FA were sent a sign-up leaflet and encouraged to enter. This year 134 farms entered the NoFA and their details were entered onto an RSPB database.

Application forms were then sent to those that entered and on their return, considered and shortlisted, using the information provided and a scoring sheet. See Annex 10 and 11. The best from each region or country were visited and judged by agricultural staff from within the area and assessed using the criteria set out in the judging form. See Annex 12.

The winners from each region or country were chosen and in due course, presented with a cheque for £200, a certificate and a plaque. The certificate and plaque were designed by RSPB staff. See Annex 13 and 14. This offered another opportunity for media coverage at a local and regional level, to cover the winner's achievements and best practice in relation to EU policies and to promote the wider project. See Annex 15.

Each of the regional and country winners were considered by a UK judging panel, which consisted of wildlife experts from the RSPB (Conservation Director), Butterfly Conservation (Chief Executive), Plantlife (Chief Executive) and BBC Countryfile Magazine (Editor). After an assessment of the farmer's submissions and those of the regional judges, a shortlist of four farmers was drawn up.

The four finalists were promoted from 2 May until 27 August, through all suitable media channels with the UK award winner voted for and so chosen by the public. This gave the farmers involved widespread recognition and praise for conservation on their farms, in front of a significant audience and helps to encourage other farmers to follow their example of conservation delivery.

The mechanisms involved in promoting the opportunity for the public to vote included national and regional newspapers, magazines, radio, television, e-newsletters, websites, agricultural shows, reserves, public fairs, social media and on-farm events.

The ability to vote was made as inclusive as possible. The voting cards were designed to be understood yet maximised the information available. They were DL in size, with 20,000 produced. This design process was by RSPB staff and the printing was out-sourced. See Annex 16.

More information on each farm was available on the project's website, allowing the public to make a well informed vote, on-line. A dedicated phone-line was set up to allow those without

access to the voting cards or a computer from which to vote on-line, the opportunity to request voting cards to be delivered by post.

A number of large posters were also designed by RSPB staff and printed in-house, to publicise the opportunity to vote at the most popular RSPB reserves. See Annex 17 for an A4 example of the poster.

In order to maximise public participation, an incentive to vote was factored into the competition too, on the understanding that publicity would be afforded to Luton Hoo 5-star hotel, golf and spa in exchange for the prize that they donated.

All this was publicised in the RSPB's magazine which is circulated to approximately 2.1 million people and the BBC Countryfile Magazine which has a circulation figure in excess of 33,000.

The number of votes throughout the summer reached an impressive 6,342. This exceeds the target of 5,000 votes. After a very tense competition, we are pleased to announce that John and James Davison won the 2010 Nature of Farming Award. See Annex 18.

An Awards Ceremony will be held at a prestigious farming conference in January 2011, to further profile the 2010 winners and the project to key decision-makers and commentators in the farming community. It will also be used to officially open the 2011 Award.

Action C9: Produce advisory packs

An A4 folder has been designed internally, with the printing out-sourced, on schedule. See Annex 19. It will be used to send each farmer, in receipt of a V&FA survey, advisory material tailored to their farms.

This ensures maximum relevance, such that each farm-specific pack includes double-sided, full colour A4 advisory sheets relating to the birds of conservation concern found on the farm and an order form for additional sheets, including those on habitat management or creation. See Annex 20, 21 and 22.

These packs, which will comprise of the map of the survey results, a report and a certificate, are critical because they provide farmers with tailored advice on how they might improve conservation management on their farms. See Annex 23, 24 and 25. In addition, farmers with birds of conservation concern are prioritised for follow-up advisory visits (Action C3).

The stock control of these sheets is managed by an administrator and when necessary, the sheets will be reviewed by the Senior Agricultural Advisor, any editorial changes made and re-printed.

The packs themselves are compiled by office volunteers or administrative staff, with 683 due to be compiled this year, exceeding the target. The packs are sent to farmers in the fourth quarter of each year, not the third quarter as intended. This is because it takes the Project Officers up to 3 months to compile the survey results.

Action C10: Produce bird guide

The new Tractor Cab Guide to Farmland Birds was published on schedule, in March 2010. It is given free to project participants. It is also given to farmers who sign up to the farming e-newsletter or project newsletter (Action F7) who therefore receive regular updates on the project; quarterly in the case of the e-newsletter and annually in the case of the project newsletter. The Tractor Cab Guide to Farmland Birds has proved to be a popular attraction to the RSPB stand at technical events, with visitors saying they have travelled the length of the showground to get their copy. As such, it has helped sign up, for example, 135 farmers to the newsletters at Cereals 2010, 46 farmers at Sheep 2010 and 80 farmers at Dairy 2010 events. A copy of the Tractor Cab Guide to Farmland Birds is enclosed. See Annex 26.

Action E1: Send questionnaires to farmers and volunteers

A questionnaire will be sent to all the farmers and volunteers involved in the project, initially at the end of 2010, to coincide with the mailing already being sent, that includes the project newsletter.

The volunteers involved will receive a customer care questionnaire, which will aim to establish their understanding of environmental policy, wildlife gains, gauge their satisfaction and improve their experience.

The farmers involved will receive a questionnaire designed to identify practices and attitudes at the beginning of their involvement and track changes in these variables following project participation. It will assess how they change their management practices as a result of participation. Subsequently, another questionnaire will be sent next year.

Both questionnaires will be designed in consultation with the RSPB's market research team. They will also establish which participants would rather receive electronic communication in the future. This will inform how future questionnaires are sent to farmers and more importantly, how many paper copies of the newsletter need to be printed and mailed annually.

The assumption is that a large proportion of questionnaires will be returned because of the time of year they are sent, because all participants willingly sought involvement in the project and because a freepost envelope in which to return the questionnaire is enclosed in the mailing.

The freepost address is the RSPB HQ and once received, a dedicated volunteer will undertake the data entry and analysis. This will conclude once questionnaires have stopped arriving in the post.

Action E2: Assess impact of project on farmland bird populations

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) results for 2009 have recently been announced and show that farmland bird populations in the UK are at their lowest since national monitoring began in the 1960s. The 4% dip in the national Farmland Bird Indicator between 2008 and 2009 may be the result of a combination of a harsh winter and the loss of set-aside - the area of arable land taken out of production under the Common Agricultural Policy. However, the long-term decline in the indicator is clearly due to agricultural changes that can be mitigated by the management measures promoted in this project. The latest results highlight the urgency of this work.

There have already been some notable successes. A 1,600ha farm in Cambridgeshire has signed an agreement to put 1,200 skylark plots into winter cereal crops each year for the next ten years. Two skylark plots per ha will increase skylark chick production by 50%. Therefore this represents 600ha of good crop management for skylarks. Indeed, this one farm alone represents 7.5% of a national government target for skylark plot take-up! This story will be featured in the national media in October (Action F5).

The full extent of the management carried out will be evaluated from the analysis of the questionnaires sent out to participating farmers.

Action F1: Create and maintain project website

We have changed the location of the project website to www.rspb.org.uk/farming. By having the project on our home website, we can develop and update it in-house. The RSPB website is also already the site visitors go to for information about the key elements of the project: V&FA (Actions B1, C1, C2 and C5), NoFA (Action C8) and advice on how to help farmland birds, including contact with our regional advisers (Actions C3 and C4).

The EU LIFE+ logo and acknowledgement of the funding to support our work with farmers has been put on the homepage of www.rspb.org.uk/farming, together with a link to the EU website page on the Birds Directive. We have added a new section entitled Agri-environment heroes, which consists of case studies of the demonstration farmers we are establishing through the course of this project. We have also populated this area with some amended case studies of farmers we have worked with in the past. The Agri-environment heroes will feature short whole-farm case studies designed to inspire visitors to improve their farms for wildlife. There is an existing area on the Farm Wildlife website for more technical case studies to give practical information about how to manage individual habitats for the benefit of wildlife, and there will be a link to these from www.rspb.org.uk/farming as they are developed. There is a link to the Farm Wildlife website to allow visitors to ask questions, make comments and post ideas on the discussion forum and to find out about events using the events calendar.

We aim to revamp www.rspb.org.uk/farming to further increase the profile of the EU LIFE+ programme, and simplify navigation to the key areas relevant to the project. This work is planned to be undertaken in November 2010. When this has been completed, the site will be promoted through national specialist media and other websites. See Annex 27 for a screenshot of the current homepage.

There were 3,014 visits to the project homepage between 1 January and 31 August 2010. We expect to see this figure rise following promotion of the project when the website has been revamped.

Action F2: Information boards

A job request has been submitted and discussions have taken place with RSPB design staff, who have provided advice on design, layout and materials for the information boards. The project team have agreed images and text for use on the boards, and each will carry the caption “The EU Birds and Habitats Directives aim to protect biodiversity in Europe. I’m doing my bit for farmland birds” alongside the EU logo. The design of the boards has been out-sourced, via our in-house design team, to ensure deadlines can be met.

The original intention was to provide every farmer involved in the project with a board. However, it is now felt that the boards will have greater influence if displayed on a select

number of farms, where the farmer is a shining example of delivering high-quality habitat for farmland birds. Such farms are likely to be selected as demonstration farms under the project, and boards are more likely to be seen by other farmers and members of the public on farm walks, open days and events. Therefore, we now propose to produce boards for a smaller number of farms in a more targeted way to maximise the potential for information dissemination. Each farm will display one or more boards that reflect the conservation management underway on their farm, to be displayed in a prominent position.

Although the design of the boards has been slightly delayed due to the changes in the use of the boards, it is anticipated that they will be produced and sent out to appropriate farmers on schedule before the end of 2010. Having the boards available for use at the end of the year gives us greater opportunity to select the most appropriate farmers based on the results of V&FA surveys, and the associated increase in knowledge of what individual farmers are doing or would like to do on their farms. Once the boards are produced, they will remain in storage until such a time as they are needed.

Boards will be sent out annually and the timing of this will greatly depend on the results of farmland bird surveys through the V&FA. The farm specific packs including the maps, reports and certificates are made available to farmers involved in the autumn/winter following their survey, and this seems an appropriate time to distribute the boards. For the production schedule of demonstration boards, see Annex 28.

Action F3: Layman's report

This is planned for 2012.

Action F4: Conference

This is planned for 2012.

Action F5: Media work

A summary of press releases sent out by the media team, and coverage for the project, is shown in Annex 29. The target for 12 regional stories and 1 national story for the NoFA has been exceeded. For the V&FA, the target for one national story has been met and the target for 12 regional stories exceeded. There are further opportunities for media coverage before the end of 2010 so this coverage is likely to increase further.

As documented in Annex 29, press releases have been sent out for both the NoFA (13) and the V&FA (8) as mentioned previously. See Annex 4, 9 and 15. Fewer press releases have been required for the V&FA as there was such a strong response to the offer of the free surveys and spaces quickly filled up. Press work was halted to avoid raising expectations and disappointing farmers who wanted a survey but could not be provided with one due to capacity issues.

Both the NoFA and the V&FA have received electronic coverage on various websites and social media outlets including Twitter, Facebook, the RSPB's own Community forum and our Nature's Voice podcast.

There is no guarantee that the press will run these stories, but we work closely with our media team to ensure they have the best possible chance of featuring in the press we target. This is reflected in the 51 stories printed on the NoFA (5 national, 46 regional) and the 39 stories printed on the V&FA (1 national and 38 regional). See Annex 30 for a selection of printed

articles. Further press releases are planned for later in the year, once the winner of the NoFA has been identified, and we start recruiting farmers and volunteers for V&FA surveys in 2011.

We are aware that the profile of the EU LIFE+ funding was not promoted in the early press releases, and this has subsequently been rectified. We will continue to make reference to EU support for the life of the project.

A PR plan for the 2011 NoFA will be drawn up before the end of 2010 to ensure that we continue to maximise opportunities to promote the project.

Action F6: Produce project newsletter

The project newsletter is currently being produced and on schedule. It will inform our audience about project delivery, promote key messages and describe case studies.

It will be distributed to all project participants and the farming community, in a paper format or electronically.

The newsletter will provide an interesting and informative read and contain key information about the outputs of the project at both regional and national levels. It will use text and images to describe species protection and conservation management. It will relate this to EU policies and refer to the LIFE+ and RSPB websites.

The front page feature will profile the EU LIFE+ Project. For the production schedule of the newsletter, see Annex 31.

Action F7: Project networking - attend national technical events

In 2010, the RSPB attended the Balmoral Show, Royal Highland Show and Royal Welsh Show, where the winners of the NoFA 2010 were presented with their prizes in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, respectively. We also attended Cereals 2010, Sheep 2010, and Dairy 2010 events. These are the national technical events for arable, sheep and dairy farmers, respectively. At each event, the RSPB had stands promoting the NoFA, V&FA and RSPB advice. We attended all of the events listed in the project actions.

All of the events were a great success, with very positive feedback from farmers, who mainly came to the RSPB stand to enquire about bird surveys (Actions C1 and C2), advice (Action C3) and to sign up for the e-newsletter / project newsletter for their free Tractor Cab Guide to Farmland Birds (Action C10). The priority focus of RSPB staff on the stands was to sign farmers up to the newsletters, and the success rate for each show was sign-up by 135 farmers at Cereals 2010, 46 farmers at Sheep 2010 and 80 farmers at Dairy 2010.

The agricultural partner who hosted the RSPB demonstration plots at Cereals 2010 have changed their policy on working with environmental partners and have declined our request to work with them in 2011. We have approached the Crop Protection Association to work with us, and they are very enthusiastic to develop this, with RSPB demonstration areas on the stand of one of their member organisations. However, we are concerned that this may be difficult to organise in time to plan and implement plots for 2011. We are looking at a contingency plan of taking mobile demonstration plots and talking to organisations that have already planned to have environmental demonstration plots at this event next year.

5.2. Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

These are not relevant.

5.3. Envisaged progress until next report

The Gantt chart below shows progress to date and progress envisaged over the rest of the project. It is based on the timetable shown in Part C of the project proposal. The end of the inception period is marked with a thick black line, and progress to date is shown using bold ticks.

The Gantt chart is followed by updated lists of project deliverables, project milestones and activity reports. These are based on the corresponding lists in Part C of the proposal. During the next reporting period (01/10/2010–30/9/2011), we expect to complete:

- identification of farmers and volunteers for 2011 surveys (action B1)
- surveys for 2011 (action C1)
- dissemination of survey outputs for 2010 (action C2)
- follow-up visits for 2010 farmers (action C3)
- farmer workshops for 2010 (action C4)
- volunteer workshops for 2011 (action C5)
- recruitment of demonstration farms for 2010 in each region and production of at least 1 case study per region (action C7)
- Biodiversity Award for 2011 with national winner identified (action C8)
- Advisory packs produced for 2011 (action C9)
- 2010 Questionnaire results collated and analysed (action E1)
- Website revamped to fully profile EU LIFE+ project (action F1)
- Production of information boards (action F2)
- Production and dissemination of 2010 project newsletter (action F6)
- Attend at least 5 national farming technical events (action F7)

In addition, we will have started:

- Production of survey outputs for 2011 (action C2)
- Selection of demonstration farms, development of case studies and running farmer workshops for 2011 (actions C7 and C4)
- Production of 2011 project newsletter (action F6)

Number/name	2010				2011				2012				13
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I
A1. Manage project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Actual progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A2. Monitor progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Actual progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A3. External audit															✓	
Actual progress	Not applicable															
A4. After-LIFE plan																✓
Actual progress	Not applicable															
B1. Identify farmers/vols	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓				
Actual progress	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓				
C1. Surveys		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓					
Actual progress		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓					
C2. Survey outputs			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓					
Actual progress			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓					
C3. Follow-up visits			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actual progress			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C4. Farmer workshops			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
Actual progress			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
C5. Volunteer w/shops	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓						
Actual progress	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓						
C7. Demo farms			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
Actual progress			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
C8. Biodiversity Award	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actual progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C9. Advisory packs	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
Actual progress	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
C10. Bird guide		✓	✓													
Actual progress		✓	✓													
E1. Questionnaire			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
Actual progress			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
F1. Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actual progress			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F2. Info boards				✓	✓	✓										
Actual progress			✓	✓												
F3. Layman's report													✓	✓		
Actual progress	Not applicable															
F4. Conference									✓	✓	✓	✓				
Actual progress	Not applicable															
F5. Media work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actual progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F6. Newsletter			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
Actual progress			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				
F7. Technical events		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓					
Actual progress		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓					

Shaded areas are where progress differs to the proposed plan, either ahead of schedule (with tick) or behind schedule (without tick)

Updated list of Project deliverables

Name of the Deliverable	Code of the associated action	Deadline	Notes at 30/09/2010
Promotional leaflet for farm surveys	B1	28 Feb 2010	Completed
Promotional leaflet for Biodiversity Award	C8	31 Mar 2010	Completed
Participation packs for volunteer surveyors	C1	31 Mar 2010 and annually thereafter	Completed
LIFE+ information boards	F2	31 Aug 2010	To be completed by Dec 2010
Tractor cab guide to farmland birds	C10	30 Sep 2010	Completed
Project questionnaire	E1	31 Oct 2010 and annually thereafter	Questionnaire to be sent out with survey outputs
Advisory pack (folder and contents)	C9	Folder by 30 Nov 2010 / contents annually as required	Packs to be sent out with survey outputs
Report maps – laminated for farmers, non-laminated for surveyors	C2	30 Nov 2010 and annually thereafter	To be completed Nov 2010
Project newsletter	F6	15 Dec 2010 and annually thereafter	To be completed and disseminated Dec 2010
Farm management reports	C3	31 Dec 2010 and annually thereafter	To be completed Dec 2010
Media articles	F5	At least 25 by 31 Dec 2010 and in years 2 and 3	Completed
Layman's report	F3	Draft by 30 Jun 2012 / final by 31 Dec 2012	No change
Conference delegate pack	F4	30 Nov 2012	No change
Audit report	A3	31 Mar 2013	No change
After-LIFE plan	A4	31 Mar 2013	No change
Conference delegate pack	F4	30 Nov 2012	No change

Updated list of Project milestones

Name of the milestone	Code of the associated action	Deadline	Notes at 30/09/2010
Manage project	A1	Throughout (Steering Group mtgs twice yearly)	On schedule
Monitor project	A2	Throughout	On schedule
Liaise with media	F5	Throughout	On schedule
Place project details and materials on website	F1	31 Mar 2010 – update throughout	To be completed Nov 2010
Recruit farmers and volunteer surveyors	B1	31 Mar 2010 and annually thereafter	Completed
Run volunteer workshops	C5	15 Apr 2010 and annually thereafter	Completed
Carry out farm surveys	C1	15 Jul 2010 and annually thereafter	Completed
Announce winner of Biodiversity Award	C8	15 Oct 2010 and annually thereafter	On schedule
Identify farms for follow-up advisory visits	C3	31 Oct 2010 and annually thereafter	On schedule
Run farmer workshops	C4	30 Nov 2010 and annually thereafter	To be completed Mar 2011
Deliver report maps and advisory packs to farmers (and maps to volunteers)	C2 (and C9 for advisory pack)	31 Dec 2010 and annually thereafter	On schedule
Establish demonstration farms	C7	31 Dec 2010 and annually thereafter	On schedule
Attend farming events	F7	At least 5 by 31 Dec 2010 and in years 2 and 3	Completed
Hold international conference	F4	31 Dec 2012	No change

Updated list of Project reports

Type of report	Original deadline	Notes at 30/09/2010
Inception report	30 Sep 2010	Completed
Mid-term report with payment request	30 Sep 2011	30 Sep 2011
Final report with payment request	31 Mar 2013	31 Mar 2013

6. Financial part

6.1 Establishment of the accounting system

Using proven best practice based on our experience of implementing previous LIFE and LIFE+ projects, the project accounting system has been set up to run as an adjunct to the main RSPB accounting system utilising the financial software package OPENAccounts to record project income and expenditure. The project has been designated Society Major Project (SMP) status within the RSPB budgeting process. This means it is budgeted for, and reported against, separately from other RSPB cost centres. Within the RSPB accounting system, the project has been allocated the code **2VF-G-LIFE**. Whenever a project transaction is processed, the person entering the transaction details can enter this code, which will ensure the cost can be easily identified within the daily RSPB transactions. Management reports and transaction lists based on this project code can be produced to provide regular updates on project finances. Such reports and lists are automatically produced on a monthly basis and sent to relevant managers within the RSPB to assess the financial status of the project.

Over 75% of the total project spend is within a single expenditure category – Personnel Costs. This singles the project out from any of the current or previous LIFE or LIFE+ project the RSPB has implemented. It means that a great deal of attention must be placed on the accurate recording of personnel time spent on the project. To this end, a new type of timesheet has been prepared for use, based very closely on the model timesheet available from the LIFE+ website. The timesheet has been amended slightly to allow users to record non-LIFE work easily. This timesheet is being used in preference to the previous LIFE timesheets in use by the RSPB because they can be filled in much quicker (older versions required a description to be written for each day's work), the inference being that if the timesheets are quick and easy to fill in, staff would be more inclined to complete them on a regular basis. Within each of the 10 RSPB regions there is a designated person collating timesheets and sending them to RSPB Headquarters regularly and at least quarterly. Once at Headquarters the timesheets are costed and stored with all other financial project documentation.

Project finances are reviewed and discussed at all project meetings, but particular attention is paid to them at the bi-annual Project Steering Group meetings. As the RSPB is the principle project beneficiary, there is no need to receive project accounts from other beneficiaries before a complete overview of the financial situation can be undertaken. For this reason, this project should be easier to monitor than projects involving more than one beneficiary.

6.2 Continued availability of co-financing

The project is being fully co-funded by the RSPB. The management of the RSPB are fully committed to covering all project costs not funded by the LIFE+ grant. We therefore foresee no problems in ensuring that the project is fully funded.

6.3 Costs incurred (summary by cost category and relevant comments)

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 31/08/2010 in €	% of total costs
1. Personnel	1,309,521	142,648	10.89%
2. Travel and subsistence	104,805	13,962	13.32%
3. External assistance	30,842	5,609	18.19%
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure	0	0	0.00%
Equipment	0	0	0.00%
Prototype	0	0	0.00%
5. Land purchase / long-term lease	0	0	0.00%
6. Consumables	136,652	25,385	18.58%
7. Other Costs	0	0	0.00%
8. Overheads	110,727	13,132	11.86%
TOTAL	1,692,547	200,736	11.86%

All costs converted from GBP to EUR using exchange rate of 0.8914 GBP / EUR

As shown in the table above, during the first 8 months of project implementation we have incurred 11.86% of total project costs. Whilst this is lower than what we might expect at this stage of the project, there are, we believe, 2 clear reasons for this apparent underspend –

- 1) The processes in place to ensure as many timesheets as possible are collated efficiently are only now being fully implemented. For the first 6 to 8 months of the project, staff were still getting used to the administrative burden of completing timesheets. We are aware of where there are regional gaps in personnel time recording, and are ensuring that these are filled going forward.
- 2) The significant depreciation of the GBP against the EURO that has occurred since the project application was submitted has meant that actual costs (which are exclusively incurred in GBP) are relatively undervalued when converted to Euros and compared against the project budget. For example, the percentage of the original GBP project budget that has been spent to date is closer to 15%. Of course conversion rates could still change dramatically over the course of the project, especially in the current financial climate, therefore it is impossible to say if this observation will influence future project spend as much as it has depressed spend to date.

Looking at individual budget categories, expenditure on *personnel* costs are lower than expected, primarily due to the factors outlined in (1) above. Recruitment of new project staff has been undertaken successfully, with four new Regional Project Officers employed to oversee the implementation of the project in their respective regions. In other regions some of the project roles, for example the Farmland Bird Advisers, have been undertaken by a number of individuals (each responsible for a subset of the region), as opposed to one person in each

region. Furthermore, two people are sharing the role of the Project Manager. This was initially to cover for maternity leave, but going forward the duties relating to project PR and publicity is being managed separately from other Project Management duties.

We have ensured (and will continue to ensure) that the calculations for personnel costs only includes actual gross salary plus the attributable employers social charges (social security and pension contributions) *that the RSPB has a legal responsibility to provide for its employees*. By doing so, this will satisfy the requirement of excluding non-obligatory social charges from the calculation of personnel costs (c.f. Art 25.2 of the Common Provisions).

Project expenditure on **Travel and Subsistence** (T&S) is below expectations on 13.32%. We will see how this develops as the project matures, however one explanation for this is that a significant proportion of travel expenditure relates to the travel costs of volunteers whilst completing farmland bird surveys. As many of these surveys were only being completed towards the end of August, it is likely that the related travel costs have not yet been submitted for payment by the RSPB.

External Assistance expenditure is roughly at the predicted level at 18.19% of budget. In fact, this expenditure relates to one transaction – the payment of a subcontractor to create a demonstration plot for the Cereals 2010 technical event. There is uncertainty over whether a repeat of this cost will be incurred in future years.

Expenditure on **Consumables** is also roughly according to the phased budget (taking exchange rate variance into account) at 18.58% of total cost. At present most of the consumables spend has been incurred on producing the project dissemination materials for use during the first year of the project. This includes leaflets and advisory packs, as well as (the single largest consumables cost to date) printing the Bird Guide (Action C10). Other, smaller consumables costs, incurred to date include workshop costs for the volunteer and farmer workshops that have taken place, and postage costs for the dissemination materials.

Note that Printing Costs (undertaken by an external printer) has been budgeted under the Consumables budget category. This was because the guidance for consumables given when the application was prepared mentioned “*should the project include a significant dissemination activity in which substantial mailing, photocopying, or other communication forms are used, the corresponding costs may also be declared here*”. However, it has been brought to our attention that printing costs undertaken by an external supplier should be budgeted under External Assistance (or possibly Other Costs). We would welcome advice on whether the project external printing costs (budgeted at €46,964) should be moved to a different category, or if they should remain budgeted under, and reported against, consumables?

There has been a number of costs incurred that were not foreseen in the original budget, however are obviously intrinsically connected to the project implementation. This includes the following costs:

Computers and GIS software for the four new project staff. This amounts to approx €5,000 in total. Aside from using the computer for daily work, the GIS software that is installed on the computer is used to create the maps sent to the farmers resulting from the surveys undertaken as part of the project. As all project staff are now in post, we do not envisage these costs to increase. These costs would naturally sit under the consumables

budget category (computers such as those purchased for this project are not capitalised in the RSPB accounts).

Technical event fees – There is inevitably a fee to be paid to ensure the participation of the RSPB at the Technical Events where the project will be displayed. For example, the fee for attending Cereals 2010 was £3,500 (c. €4,000). Whilst this is an extreme example, we would suggest that annual fees for these events would cost around €7,000, giving a total cost over the 3 years of €21,000. We are very confident that savings can be found from other budget headings to allow these costs to be included in the project accounts without overspending the total project budget (a likely source would be savings found from reduced personnel spend). We apologise that this essential cost was not included in the original project budget.

At present we are not expecting a budget modification to be required, especially if the GBP/EURO exchange rate continues to hold at its current level throughout the course of the project. We are therefore confident that the second pre-financing payment, together with the Mid-Term Reports will be forthcoming on schedule.

As requested, we have attempted to allocate actual costs to specific action codes in order to complete the table shown below. The accuracy of allocation is debatable, especially when a cost, or a person's time, could be allocated to a number of equally relevant action codes. Figures for foreseen costs include Overheads (at 7% of direct action cost)

(“Spent so far” figures cover period 1 January to 31 August 2010)

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Projected final cost
A1 – Manage Project	73,657	36,573	73,657
A2 – Monitor Project Progress	22,028	2,400	22,028
A3 – External Audit	12,318	0	12,318
A4 – After LIFE Communication Plan	0	0	0
B1 – Identify Farmers and Volunteers	37,081	6,425	37,081
C1 – Farm Surveys	526,216	61,097	526,216
C2 – Survey Outputs	325,412	15,263	325,412
C3 – Advisory Visits	172,254	20,195	157,038
C4 – Farmer Workshops	64,593	5,183	64,593
C5 – Volunteer Workshops	61,515	5,895	61,515
C6 – Thank-You Events (REMOVED)	0	0	0
C7 – Demonstration Farm Network	41,234	4,404	41,234
C8 – Biodiversity Award Scheme	120,143	10,095	120,143
C9 – Advisory Pack	20,850	1,595	20,850
C10 – Bird Guide	21,779	11,553	21,779
E1 – Attitudes Questionnaire	10,071	0	10,071

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Projected final cost
F1 – Project Website	23,016	2,017	23,016
F2 – Information Boards	15,872	0	15,872
F3 – Layman’s Report	11,444	0	11,444
F4 – International Conference	22,378	0	22,378
F5 – Media Work	14,643	1,447	14,643
F6 – Project Newsletter	33,008	1,831	33,008
F7 – Project Networking	63,035	14,763	78,251
TOTAL	1,692,547	200,736	1,692,547

As shown above, for most action costs the indicative expenditure to date is relatively low. We expect this is mainly because of the lag in submitting expenses to the RSPB and collating timesheets. There is no large subcontracted expenditure on this project (where spend is contractually regulated), instead costs can only be allocated to the project when expense claims are submitted for payment, or timesheets submitted for costing. Both these tasks can occur up to three months after the date the cost was actually incurred. Secondly, the depressed spend compared to budget due to the effects of the exchange rate to be used for 2010 expenditure also influences the above table. Even so, costs for project management (Action A1) are relatively high, due to the increased effort in setting the project up during the initial stages. In addition, costs for the bird guide (Action C10) are also high, due to the first print-run (of two) taking place in March 2010.

With regard to our estimations of the projected final cost, it is still too early in the project to make any definitive decisions on the final cost of the project actions, especially in relation to those that have not yet been undertaken. For the most part, the minor budget variations we have already identified can be easily subsumed into the existing action costs. The one exception is the cost for attendance fees for technical events. Due to this, we suggest an increase in the cost for action F7 offset by a decrease (in personnel costs) for action C3.

Aside from the above alteration, all other project costs remain identical to the project budget. In reality, due to the depreciated GBP currency compared to Euro devaluing 2010 expenditure, the likelihood is there will be a small decrease in overall spend by the end of the project. However, should GBP appreciate more than expected over the next two years, the project could still find itself with an effective overspend – accurate prediction is impossible in the current climate. What is reasonable to suggest it that it is more likely for the project to end underspent in Euro terms than overspent. We will monitor the situation closely and give updates in all reports submitted to LIFE+ as the project progresses.

7. List of annexes

Annex 1	Minutes of the LIFE+ Project Steering Group
Annex 2	Minutes of the UK Steering Group
Annex 3	Examples of V&FA leaflets (farmers and volunteers)
Annex 4	Press release
Annex 5	Participation pack
Annex 6	Invitation to workshop
Annex 7	Agri-environment heroes case studies
Annex 8	NoFA sign-up leaflets
Annex 9	Press release
Annex 10	NoFA application form
Annex 11	NoFA scoring sheet
Annex 12	NoFA judging form
Annex 13	NoFA certificate
Annex 14	NoFA plaque final proof
Annex 15	Press release
Annex 16	NoFA voting card
Annex 17	NoFA poster
Annex 18	NoFA winners
Annex 19	A4 folder
Annex 20	A4 lapwing advisory sheet
Annex 21	Advisory sheet order form
Annex 22	A4 skylark plots advisory sheet
Annex 23	V&FA map
Annex 24	V&FA report
Annex 25	V&FA certificate
Annex 26	Tractor Cab Guide to Farmland Birds
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