LIFE Project Number

LIFE18 NAT/DK/000747

Mid-term Report

Covering the project activities from 01/01/2023 to 31/07/2025

Reporting Date

31/10/2025

LIFE PROJECT NAME or Acronym

LIFE Open Woods

Data Project

Project location:	
Project start date:	01/09/2019
Project end date:	31/12/2027
Total budget:	6,705,710 €
EU contribution:	4,023,426 €
(%) of eligible costs:	60 %

Data Beneficiary

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This table comprises an essential part of the report and should be filled in before submission

Please note that the evaluation of your report may only commence if the package complies with all the elements in this receivability check. The evaluation will be stopped if any obligatory elements are missing.

Package completeness and correctness check	
Obligatory elements	**✓ or N/A**
Technical report	
The correct latest template for the type of project (e.g. traditional) has been followed and all sections have been filled in, in English *In electronic version only*	✓
Index of deliverables with short description annexed, in English *In electronic version only*	✓
Mid-term report: Deliverables due in the reporting period (from project start) annexed Final report: Deliverables not already submitted with the MTR annexed including the Layman's report and after-LIFE plan Deliverables in language(s) other than English include a summary in English *In electronic version only*	✓
Financial report	
The reporting period in the financial report (consolidated financial statement **and** financial statement of each Individual Beneficiary) is the same as in the technical report with the exception of any terminated beneficiary for which the end period should be the date of the termination.	✓
Consolidated Financial Statement with all 5 forms duly filled in and signed and dated *Electronically Q-signed or if paper submission signed and dated originals* and in electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets + full Excel file)*	✓
Financial Statement(s) of the Coordinating Beneficiary, of each Associated Beneficiary and of each affiliate (if involved), with all forms duly filled in (signed and dated). The Financial Statement(s) of Beneficiaries with affiliate(s) include the total cost of each affiliate in 1 line per cost category. *In electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets + full Excel files) + in the case of the Final report the overall summary forms of each beneficiary electronically Q-signed or if paper submission, signed and dated originals**	✓
Amounts, names and other data (e.g. bank account) are correct and consistent with the Grant Agreement / across the different forms (e.g. figures from the individual statements are the same as those reported in the consolidated statement)	✓
Mid-term report (for all projects except IPs): the threshold for the second pre-financing payment has been reached	✓
Beneficiary's certificate for Durable Goods included (if required, i.e. beneficiaries claiming 100% cost for durable goods) *Electronically Q-signed or if paper submission signed and dated originals* and in electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets)*	✓
Certificate on financial statements (if required, i.e. for beneficiaries with EU contribution ≥750,000 € in the budget) *Electronically Q-signed or if paper submission signed original and in electronic version (pdf)*	N/A
Other checks	
Additional information / clarifications and supporting documents requested in previous letters from the Agency (unless already submitted or not yet due) *In electronic version only*	✓

This table, page 2 of the Mid-term / Final report, is completed - each tick box is filled in *In electronic version only*	✓

**signature by a legal or statutory representative of the beneficiary / affiliate concerned*

1. Table of contents

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2. List of key-words and abbreviations

Amphi	Amphi Consult
AVJF	Aage V Jensens Fonde
DE	Germany
DEP	Danish Environmental Protection Agency DK Denmark
DNA	Danish Nature Agency
FLC	Forest and Landscape College, University of Copenhagen
INFOBIOM	Nordic Networks for integrated forest resource and biodiversity monitoring
LOW	LIFE Open Woods
LUKE	Natural Resources Institute Finland
NIBIO	Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
NINA	Norsk Institutt for Naturforskning
NNP	Nature National Park
N2000	Natura 2000
PM	Project Manager
PO	Project Owner
PMG	Project Management Group
POW	Private Owners Network
SGAV	Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
SNSH	Stiftung Naturschutz Slesvig-Holstein
SYKE	Finnish Environment Institute

3. Executive summary

The overall project objectives of the LIFE Open Woods project is to improve the conservation status of forest habitats with a special focus on the hermit beetle (*Osmoderma eremita)* in Denmark and Northern Germany.

The project targets 8.6 % (1.855 ha) of all deciduous forest habitats in Danish N2000 sites including EU priority habitats 91E0 (214 ha) and 91D0 (183 ha). All targeted habitats (9110, 9120, 9130, 9150, 9160, 9170, 9190, 91D0, 91E0) have unfavorable conservation status in DK, 8 of them in EU. Although the area and range are mostly stable, their structure and ecological function are unfavorable.

In the 19th century in DK, the forest area had fallen to 2-4%, which led to the first Danish forestry law[1] and prohibition of grazing in the woods. Extensive forest drainage in the 19th and 20th centuries intensified timber production, which remained in focus until 1989. This resulted in drained, dark forests with little amount of deadwood and few veteran trees, uniform age structure, lack of natural dynamic and focus on economically attractive tree species.

The Danish Forest Act in 1989 introduced a multipurpose for the forests, but management has not sufficiently focused on nature. The average amount of deadwood in managed Danish forests is 5.7 m3/ha. Significant loss of saproxylic species diversity was found when deadwood falls below 50-70 m3/ha. Although the average amount of dead wood in deciduous forests within Danish N2000 sites is almost 3 times higher than outside of the network, it is still below thresholds set by the Danish definition of favorable conservation status.

The project focuses also on the hermit beetle which is a priority species in the habitats directive appendix II and IV, which is dependent on veteran trees and deadwood, as is 30 % of the forest related biodiversity. The species has an unfavorable conservation status in DK and DE and is among most threatened invertebrates in the EU. It is most abundant in old open semi-natural forests and in veteran trees in human made environments. The intensive forestry and fragmentation of the habitats have led to a decline of the spreading of the species due to the lack of successors for the suitable host trees, overgrowth and little regeneration of suitable habitat across the species range. There is an urgent need for action to protect and appropriately manage existing veteran trees and ensure suitable habitat in the future. The project targets the Danish population of hermit beetle on three N2000 sites. The remaining populations are on private land and dependent on extensive cooperation with private landowners, which needs facilitation. In Schleswig-Holstein (DE) the population of hermit beetle is very small with approximately 40 host trees. Only in 1 out of 3 N2000 areas in Schleswig-Holstein that are designated for the hermit beetle, is the species present.

To reach the project objectives the project have some deliverables where the key deliverables are:

1. Best practice methods catalogue
2. Baseline for monitoring saproxylic beetles report (in DE)
3. Baseline monitoring report
4. Final monitoring report
5. Best practice guidelines for private forest owners Furthermore, the key outputs expected are:

1. Collection and dissemination of best practice within forest management for biodiversity
2. The conservation activities: veteranization, giving light to veteran trees, forest grazing, restoring natural hydrology, enrichment plantings, risk tree management, management of hermit beetle population

3. Monitoring of the conservation actions
4. Private owners network for private forest owners with hermit beetle populations
5. Developing compensation schemes for forest management for biodiversity purposes
6. Developing and executing a competence course in forest management for biodiversity
7. Facilitation workshops on selected conservation activities
8. Dissemination to the general public and the national and international fields for forest management for biodiversity

So far, three of the five key deliverables have been delivered; the best practice methods catalogue, the baseline for monitoring Saproxylic beetles (DE) and the baseline monitoring report. Of the key outputs we are well on our way with all the above mentioned key outputs. Number 5 and 6 is completed.

Some deviations of significance have occurred, however, there are no issues that are expected to affect the overall implementation of the project. The three main issues for the project implementation have been firstly COVID-19, secondly the political appointment of 15 Nature National Parks (NNPs) and up to 75.000 hectares of untouched forest in total in Denmark during the first years of the project period and thirdly the changed process for obtaining permits for nature management project activities. All issues have delayed and changed some activities in the LIFE project. However, the political appointment of NNPs and untouched forests have also created some synergies with the project that have most likely supported the project and vice versa. This is a complex matter and therefore further described in detail in chapter 5 page 10.

A2 Application for permissions and implementation plans

Obtaining the permissions for action C3, grazing and action C4, hydrology have been delayed, due to the political decision of establishing NNPs and appointing untouched forest. Furthermore, the process for obtaining permits have changed and have become more complex.

C3 Establishment of grazing and C4 Improvement of hydrological conditions

Due to the establishment of NNPs some geographical changes will occur for actions C3 and C4 and implementation revised and delayed. It has been assessed where to move the activities to, and new suitable sites have been found within the existing project areas. Furthermore, the amount of hydrological projects have diminished. The projects will still be conducted but not in the LIFE project, as the timeframe for obtaining permits for many of the hydrological projects exceed the LIFE projects period.

E5 Dissemination to public and info materials

The public excursions were delayed due to COVID-19 and a heavy load of public excursions in the DNA sites due to the appointment of NNPs and untouched forest. A nature dissemination product was developed instead, and this was launched in June 2025.

F1 Changes of the project management group and project owner

There has been some further changes in the Project Management Group. Amphi Consult has appointed a new PMG member instead of Marzenna Rasmussen. In December 2023 Søren Thomsen took over. DEP has appointed one new PMG members instead of Ditte Gammeltoft and Maria Bengtson. In September 2024 Ditte Gammeltoft was replaced by Kasper Grønbech. Maria Bengtson resigned the position in July 2025. Lastly, the project owner has changed, as there was a change in the management of the local office of the Danish Nature Agency that manages the LIFE Open Woods project. The local chief forest officer changed from Peter Brostrøm to Uffe Strandby the 1st of July 2024. Uffe Strandby took over all the responsibilities of Peter Brostrøm in the LIFE Open Woods project. In June 2024 a new assistant project manager was appointed – Kristina Winther Pedersen. She has held the position until July 2025.

4. Introduction

The overall objectives of the project are to:

- Improve conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function.
- Improve conservation status of the hermit beetle in four N2000 sites.
- Build capacity, share best practice, increase and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs.
- Contribute to the development of the next generation of action plans for state owned forests in 23 N2000 sites in Denmark based on best practice on achieving favorable conservation status of habitats and species of EU concern.
- Contribute to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark.
- Contribute to the Biodiversity 2020 targets.

The overall objectives are foreseen to be met by the expected long-term results of the projects, which are:

- Development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types.
- Structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved.
- Implementation plan for Bechsteins bat (*Myotis bechsteinii)* in one N2000 site prepared.
- Improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany).
- Secured existing and future habitat for hermit beetle populations by: min. 370 veteran trees secured, 113 selected prunings, long-term management agreements with private landowners signed in 3 Danish N2000 sites.
- Connectivity of hermit beetle habitats increased by setting up mould boxes in two Danish N2000 sites.
- Preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site.
- Implementation plans for sites with hermit beetles in four (three in DK and one in DE) N2000 based on best management practice prepared.
- Guidelines for best practice prepared and disseminated.
- A Private Owners Network organized in Denmark of min. nine estate owners of land with hermit beetle populations. Aiming on increasing the private owners' knowledge on forest management for hermit beetle.
- Recommendations for improvement of Danish compensation schemes for forest biodiversity prepared.
- 21 drafts of next generation action plans (2021) for DK forests in N2000 prepared.
- Present and future forest managers educated in principles and best practice of management of all forest habitats for favorable conservation status (app. 80-95 members of DNA staff, min. 50 state and private forest managers/owners, approx. 100 students).
- Awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders.

The two targeted species which both have unfavorable conservation status are:

Hermit beetle (*Osmoderma eremita*)[1]	Bechsteins bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*)

The nine targeted habitat types are:

9110 Luzulo-Fagetum beech forests	9150 Medio-European lime-stone beech forests of the Cephalan-thero-Fagion	9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains
9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrublayer (Quercion robori-petraeae or Ilici-Fagenion)	9160 Sub-Atlantic and me-dio- European oak or oak-hornbeam forests of the Carpinion betuli	91D0 Bog woodland
9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests	9170 Galio-Carpinetum oak-hornbeam forests	91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Al-nion incanae, Salicion albae)

To improve the conservation status the threats are identified, and are the following: Intensive forestry, Dark forests, Lack of veteran trees, Lack of natural processes and dynamics in the forests (grazing, natural hydrology), Low diversity in tree species, especially flowering bushes and trees are missing.

The project is carried out at 24 sites in 24 different SPAs/pSCIs. DK-24 in the N2000 area DK006X238 is no longer a part of the project. This is further elaborated in chapter 5 p. 12. The project sites are listed below:

Site	**Site name SPA/pSCA**	**Site**	**Site name SPA/pSCA**
DK-01	Farumskove /DK002X212	DK-13	Stagsrode Skov DK00BX045/DK00BX167
DK-02	Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov /DK003X204	DK-14	Silkeborgskovene /DK00DY262
DK-03	Gribskov /DK003X208	DK-15	Velling Skov DK00DZ034/DK002153
DK-04	Bidstrupskovene /DK004X216	DK-16	Hald Inderø /DK00EX139
DK-05	Myrdeskov /DK005X224	DK-17	Livø /DK00EY124
DK-06	Klinteskoven DK006X090/DK006X090	DK-18	Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund DK00FX126/DK00FX126
DK-07	Ulvshale DK006X089/DK006X233	DK-19	Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov DK00FX007/DK00FX125

[1] A prioritized species protected by the habitats directive appendix II and IV

DK-08	Almindingen DK007B371/DK007B387	DK-20	Æbelø DK008X076/DK008X184
DK-09	Hammersholm og Slot-slyngen /DK007X243	DK-21	Lekkende /DK006X237
DK-10	DK-10 Pamhule Skov DK009X059/DK009B390	DK-22	Bognæs DK004Y105/DK003X209
DK-11	Gråsten Dyrehave DK009X068/DK009B392	DK-23	Sorø Sønderskov /DK005X227
DK-12	Augustenborg Skov /DK009X280	DE-1	Naturwald Stodthagen und angrenzende Hoch-moore /DE1526353

5. Administrative part

The project management is handled in action F1.

DNA is coordinating beneficiary and handles the overall project management. From April 2020 and until September 2022 the overall project manager, who oversees the technical implementation of the project, was Steffen Michael Thomsen, and from October 2022 Maria Voigt Sonnichsen took over this role. A financial officer assists the overall project manager; Søren Rasmussen who is very experienced in implementing LIFE projects and Berit Land Nielsen is assisting financial manager. Together these three constitute the project secretariat. For one year from June 2024 until June 2025 Kristina Winther Pedersen had the role as assisting project manager.

The project management group (PMG) handles the site specific project management and implementation of actions, with support from the project secretariat. The project management group is comprised of project coordinators from each of the beneficiaries. DNA has 10 project coordinators, DEP has 2, Amphi Consult has 2, AVJF has 2, SNSH has 1, and the FLC has 1. The PMG meets when necessary. So far, it has been once a year except in 2022, where there were no meeting. Besides the annual PMG meetings there was a kick-off workshop in October 2024 on the best practice catalogue and a strategic communications workshop in April 2025.

The project is controlled by the steering committee, which is comprised of the deputy director of DNA, the project owner (DNA), one representative from DEP, one from Amphi Consult, one from AVJF, one from SNSH, and one from FLC. The deputy director of DNA Signe Nepper Larsen is also head of the steering committee. The steering committee meets once a year. The project secretariat assists the steering group. The project organization can be seen in figure 1.

The work of the steering committee and the project management group is further described in chapter 6.1, F1 on pages 43.

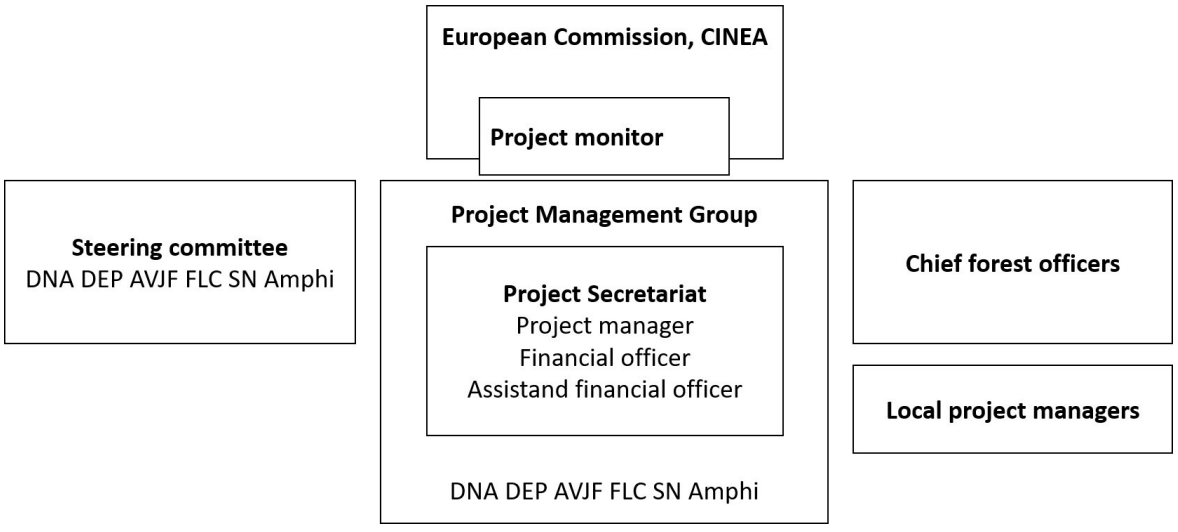

Figure 1: LIFE Open Woods organogram

Nature National Parks and Untouched forest designations

Since 2020 and until present there have been some political change within the national nature policy in DK. Firstly, in 2020 two Nature National Parks were appointed, then 3 more, and then 10 more with areas spanning from 300-5.000 hectares. Furthermore, a total of 75.000 hectares have been set aside as untouched for-

est. The new appointing of untouched forest constitute 68 % of the total state forest areas. All of the LIFE Open Woods project sites on state owned land (DK01-DK18) coincide with either a Nature National Park or untouched forest. The LIFE Open Woods project and the appointment of untouched forest can coexist in the same area. There have been some initial debate on whether the application processes[4] for LIFE Open Woods activities and untouched forest activities should be applied for altogether, which would delay the LIFE Open Woods activities. However, it is now decided that the LIFE Open Woods projects activities aren't dependent on the untouched forest activities, and no further delay due to untouched forest activities is expected. The coexistence of LIFE Open Woods activities and the Nature National Parks on mutual sites is more complex. For the Nature National Parks an add-on to the legal documents[5] has the consequence that within the application process period for the Nature National Park (from the application is sent until the Nature National Park is approved) the implementation of LIFE Open Woods conservation actions (C-actions) aren't allowed. Five LIFE Open Woods project sites coincides with appointed Nature National Parks: DK-02, DK-03, DK-04, DK-07, and DK-08. Some activities have been moved to other sites because the time schedules of the nature national park project plans spans over a longer time period than the LIFE Open Woods project. This was described in details in Midterm I 2023. The Nature National Parks is a project where nature is the main objective and it is sought to develop a more open ended management approach so nature can develop on its own premises. All production activity will come to an end, the natural hydrology will be restored and year-round grazing will be established. Thereby, the objectives of the Nature National Parks is close to the objectives of LIFE Open Woods and thereby, the areas will not diminish in nature quality by allocating LIFE Open Woods activities. The project managers of LIFE Open Woods, Nature National Parks and Untouched Forest respectively are in close dialogue to ease implementation of all three projects. For all Untouched Forest sites a management plan must be approved and go through a public process. This takes time. To ensure efficient implementation at the sites where the Untouched Forest project overlap with the LIFE Open Woods project the management plans have been prioritized to be first in line for the approval and public process.

New procedure for obtaining permits by the SGAV

In Denmark, most of hydrological and grazing projects require several permits. Firstly, for state-owned land an environmental screening given by SGAV, and secondly for all types of landowners, several permits given by the local municipalities. Within in the project period many nature projects have started including the state projects Nature National Parks, Untouched Forests and Climate-Lowlands. Many permissions for many hydrological projects are required. The management of the Danish Nature Agency decided to have a stop for sending applications for permits for a period after 2022. This was because the management wanted to align the applications that were sent, and also to have a dialogue with the management of SGAV to secure a clear understanding of what was required in and environmental screening. Due to the many applications SGAV requires applicants to pay for the time SGAV spends on processing applications. This is another reason why the management of the DNA put a hold on the applications. The DNA management has allowed the local offices to send applications again. This has delayed the work of sending the applications for permits in the LIFE Open Woods project.

Furthermore, the Danish process for obtaining permits to conduct nature management projects have changed during the time-period of the LIFE Open Woods project. The Executive Order on environmental assessment of plans and programmes and of specific projects were updated by the 14.6.2023 and the Executive Order on the Act on Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes and of Specific Projects (EIA) were updated on the 3.1.2023. These executive orders constitute the legal framework of conducting nature management projects that can affect the environment significantly.[2] The SGAV is the authority that handles these executive orders. The operationalization is that, to conduct a nature management project that can affect the environment significantly an environmental screening must be sent to SGAV and approved.

[2] Executive Order on the Act on Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes and of Specific Projects (EIA) in English translation https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2023/4

The Danish Nature Agency are currently conducting many projects of hydrology, larger cuttings and grazing projects. Furthermore, the Danish Nature Agency are conducting Nature National Parks and Climate Lowland hydrological projects. The plans for Nature National Parks also requires and environmental screening, and the climate lowland projects covers many large hydrological projects all of which also require environmental screenings. All these projects that requires approved environmental screenings from the SGAV puts a pressure on the processing offices of SGAV. This pressure has been so severe, that SGAV has put a fee on the processing. Thus, the applicant must pay the costs of the processing hours. This is also the case for private applicants. There are currently 15 Nature National Parks (corresponding to 25,000 ha), 189 sites of Untouched Forest (corresponding to 70,000 ha) and 57 climate lowland projects (the number of ha are not yet consolidated) of which the majority requires an environmental screening. This has resulted in severe prolonging of processing times, often more than one year, with applications being send back and forth, due to new more detailed requirements in the screening. To minimize the processing time the Danish Nature Agency, the DNA and SGAV is in an ongoing dialogue on how to deliver screenings that live up to all the requirements when they are handed in. This has led to the development of a paradigm for environmental screenings of hydrological projects that has been approved by the SGAV. Furthermore, the main office of DNA has developed a GIS screening tool for the local nature managers to use for conducting the environmental screenings for hydrological projects. To qualify the paradigm some pilot projects have been done to test it. Two local offices with LIFE Open Woods hydrological projects have contributed with pilot projects. The PM of the LIFE Open Woods project has continuously ensured that the required knowledge for conducting the permit applications were available to the local offices, by conducting a workshop and monthly meetings on hydrological projects. Another purpose of this, was to keep up the focus on the task at the local offices and at the main office of the DNA.

New partner in the project

The Danish government formed a new ministry the 29th of August 2024 named the Ministry of Green Transition. This ministry has the main task of implementing a political agreement for green transition. The political agreement is based on a preceding negotiation between the government, representatives for the agricultural industry, and representatives for nature protection. Due to this, a new agency has been established. The new agency is called the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment. The new agency takes over responsibilities from two other agencies; all the responsibilities of the Danish Agricultural Agency and selected responsibilities of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Sjælland, is a local office in the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and partner in the LIFE Open Woods project. All the responsibilities of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Sjælland, is now held by the new local office the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Sjælland. The new agency was established to bring together relevant competencies under one ministry in order to support the political agreement of the Green Transition. This political agreement aims to convert agricultural land to nature and forest, improve the Danish aquatic environment and support sustainable agricultural and food production. The LIFE Open Woods project partner the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Sjælland, is part of the new agency and is now called the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Sjælland. The tasks of the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Sjælland, are the same as for the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Sjælland. The office's main tasks will continue to be NOVANA monitoring, Natura 2000 planning, forest law and subsidy administration, as well as internal laboratory operations and shipping functions. As part of the division of the tasks of the former Danish Environmental Protection Agency, it has been decided that in future the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Sjælland, will be a partner in LIFE Open Woods and will handle the tasks that come with this. The change came into force the 1st of January 2025. An amendment has been requested due to this change.

5.1 Communication with EASME/CINEA

There has been two amendments thus far. We have received three letters from EASME/CINEA as follow-up on monitor visits. CINEA emphasized in the letters that the following issues should be reported on in this midterm. These are issues 29, 30, 32, 37, 40, 43, 45. See in appendix I for an overview of important questions raised in the letters and corresponding answers and remarks. Issue 29 is handled in chapter 5 page 10 and throughout the midterm report, issue 30 is handled in page 14, issue 32 is handled in page 18. Issue 37 is handled in page 23. Issue 40 is handled in page 26. Issue 43 is handled in chapter 29, and issue 45 is handled in page 32. This is also described in app. 15.

Amendment no. 1

- Requested by CINEA on the 31st of May 2022[3]
- Request sent on the 6th of February 2023
- Approved on the 23rd of March 2023

Amendment no. 2

- Proposed by project monitor on the 17th of October 2024
- Request sent on the 16th of June 2025
- Approved on the 28th of October 2025

[3] Requested in this letter: LIFE18 NAT DK 000747 MISMC3LET 220511

6. Technical part

6.1Technical progress, per action

All actions are reviewed below. For each action, a table shows the progress at each site. The tables only feature relevant sites.

A – Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans

Action A1 Adaptation of best practice	
Foreseen start date: 01-06-2020	Actual start date: 01-06-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2023	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2023

The aim of this action is to share best practice knowledge on the actions and to standardize the implementation. Some of the methods are new, and need to be adapted by and disseminated to the local management level, forest workers as well as landowners. The action is completed. It did not progress as foreseen, as there was delays due to COVID-19. A new deadline for the action was proposed and accepted with Midterm I 2023. This was 31/12/2023. The new deadline was met and the action has been completed. The 2nd study tour took place the 4th-7th of September 2023 and there were 26 participants. A report on the study tour were made, and is seen in app. 2. Furthermore, the program and participants list is in app. 1.

The action A1 contributes to fulfill the overall objective of *building capacity, share best practice, increase and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs*. Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project result of *guidelines for best practice prepared and disseminated*. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Best practice methods catalogue	1/2021	Completed	-
2nd study tour organized	10/2023	Completed	-
Best practice methods catalogue distributed among partners	10/2021	Completed	-
1st study tour organized	6/2023	Completed	-

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Best practice methods catalogue	6/2021	Completed	-

Action A2 Application for permissions and implementation plans	
Foreseen start date: 01-06-2020	Actual start date: 01-06-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2022	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-07-2027

The aim of this action is to obtain the needed permissions for the conservation actions and to ensure a successful implementation of the actions by preparing implementation plans. The action has not progressed as foreseen due to delays. The delays are mainly caused by political changes in Denmark, and changes to the procedure of obtaining permits for nature management projects by the SGAV. This new procedure has been described in chapter 5 page 11. The political changes have been elaborated in chapter 5 page 10. With the Midterm I report a postponement of the end actions date until 31/12/2025 was accepted. Due to the changed procedure for obtaining permissions for nature management projects a new postponement is needed.

The action A2 contributes to fulfill the overall objective of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function*. Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project result of *guidelines for best practice prepared and disseminated*. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Implementation plans The baseline report for monitoring saproxylic beetles was delivered in December 2023. A revised edition was delivered in December 2024, as there has been some updates on the species list of the report. SNSH delivered the implementation plan for project site DE-1 Stodthagen in October 2024. Thus all the implementation plans have been delivered.

Hydrological impact assessments The hydrological impact assessment studies have been delivered for two project sites – DK-04, Bidstrupskovene, and DK-06, Klinteskoven. Another hydrological impacts assessment study were planned in DK-14, Silkeborgskovene. During the process of environmental screening of the hydrological projects in DK-14 it became clear, that it was possible to conduct the projects without affecting the neighboring forests and fields. Therefore, a hydrological impact assessment was not needed, and we will not conduct a hydrological impact assessment on project site DK-14. The residual budget will be used as personnel time for conducting permits as this has showed to be more complex and therefore requires more working hours than expected.

Permits Obtaining permits has shown to be a more complex process than first anticipated. The process has changed as described on page 11. This has resulted in this action to be delayed and more resource demanding. The amount of time actually spent on preparing the permits has so far exceeded the expectations by 75 %. Because of the changed procedure for obtaining the permits leading to the task being more time consuming, and the prolongation of obtaining the permit, the milestone of 50 % permissions has not been reached by December 2024. After the acceptance of postponing the deadline from December 2021 to December 2024 a plan for reaching the deadline was made in November 2023. The project secretariat decided to monitor the development of the hydrological projects closely to ensure as high a completion level as possible. The following strategy was made: Firstly, there was a focus on ensuring that the managers had sufficient knowledge to conduct the applications for permits. The LOW project hosted a workshop in October 2025 on how to make the applications and how to establish the hydrological projects. Furthermore, the main office of the DNA made a paradigm for environmental screenings (applications) on hydrological projects. This paradigm was made in dialogue with SGAV who is the authority that grants the permissions. Furthermore, the paradigm was tested in Q1 and Q2 of 2024. Hydrological projects from LOW project participated in the testing. Secondly, the LOW project management focused on creating the needed support from the main office. This was done by setting up a meeting between the PM, PO and the executive chief in the main office. This meeting took place on the 15th of January 2024. Furthermore, there has been biweekly meetings since 2022 to ensure sufficient information between the three projects LIFE Open Woods, Untouched Forest and Nature National Parks. Thirdly, there has been a focus on making a plan for the local offices to send the applications. Individual plans were made with each local office in June 2024, and in January, April, and July 2025 there has been statuses on this plan. The status on the 31st of July 2025 for applications to hydrological projects can be seen in the table below.

A2 Applications hydrological projects											
Unit	HST	NSJ	MSJ	BON			SDJ	TRE	SHL		AVJF
Project site Name	DK-01 Farumskovene	DK-03 Gribskov	DK-05 Myrdeskov	DK-08 Almindingen	DK-09 Hammersholm og Slotslyngen	DK-10 Pamhuleskov	DK-11 Gråsten dyrehave	DK-13 Stagsrode	DK-14 Silkeborg Skovene	DK-15 Velling skov	DK-20 Æbelø
Applications sent July 2025 (%)	0	80	100	0	100	0	60	50	100	100	100

DK-01: The application to SGAV and the municipality was sent in 2022. However, due to the new procedures of approval that were developing at that time the application had to be redone. It was decided to postpone reapplying until the new process were in form. The applications will be recent in December 2025.

DK-02 and DK-04: The hydrological projects had to be removed from the LIFE Open Woods project activities, due to the appointment of Nature National Parks on the sites. The NNP's have a longer time schedule than the LIFE Open Woods project, which made it impossible to expect permissions to conduct the hydrological projects within the LIFE Open Woods project period. The hydrological projects will still be implemented, but in the NNP projects, and therefore, a few years later than anticipated in the LIFE Open Woods project.

DK-03: Permissions for 80 ha have been obtained. The aim in the LIFE Open Woods project was to implement hydrological projects on 220 ha. It will not be possible within the time frame of the LIFE Open Woods project to obtain permissions to implement at this scale, so the amount of hydrological project activities have been lowered to 103 ha. Meetings between the project owner, PM and end local office and local chief forest officer has been held to discuss this matter and ensure as much implementation in the LIFE Open Woods project as possible. The remaining hydrological projects will still be implemented by the NNP and Untouched Forest projects.

DK-06: The hydrological impact assessment was conducted and concluded that it was not possible to conduct the hydrological projects due to the risk of break down in the cliff of Møn, which is a site that was recently appointed as UNESCO world heritage (in July 2025).

DK-08: The application process was delayed as most of the original hydrological projects were within the appointed NNP. Alternative projects have been found within the project site that is outside the NNP site. The applications for permissions will be sent in 2025.

DK-10: The applications for permits have not yet been sent, but will be sent in December 2025.

DK-11 and DK-13: The environmental screening has been sent, but not yet approved by SGAV. Applications to municipalities have not yet been sent.

DK-14: The environmental screening has been sent, but not yet approved by SGAV. Half of the applications to municipalities have been sent, but not yet approved.

DK-15: The environmental screening has been sent but not yet approved by SGAV.

DK-18: The hydrological projects is not possible to conduct.

DK-19: A permit is not needed.

DK-20: The permission has been obtained.

For the grazing projects, the application for permits have been obtained for DK-05, DK-06 DK-17, DK-18 and DK-19. For DK-03 permits have been partly obtained. For DK-13 the application for permits have not yet been sent. See table below for status.

	A2 Applications grazing projects						
Unit	NSJ	MSJ	STS	TRE		HIM	AVJF
Project site	DK-03	DK-04	DK-06	DK-13	DK-17	DK-18	DK-19
Name	Gribskov	Myrdeskov	Klinteskoven	Stagsrode	Livø	Rold skov, Skindbjerglund	Tofte skov
Applications sent July 2025 (%)	80	100	100	0	100	100	100

Despite big efforts, the deadlines of 50 % of the permits obtained by December 2024 and 100 % of the permits obtained by December 2025 will not be reached. 83 % of the permits for grazing projects have been obtained and 25 % of the permits for hydrological projects have been obtained, and 37 % of the permits for hydrological projects have been applied for.

New deadlines are proposed. New suggested deadlines:

50 % of permissions obtained – 31st of July 2026

100 % of permissions obtained – 31st of July 2027

To ensure that the project will reach the deadlines the project management will continue to keep the partners engaged in the task. There is a progress in the task, and even though we did not reach the expected deadlines, the secretariat monitor the development in obtaining the permits closely and it will still be possible to conduct the hydrological projects within the project period.

Site name	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-01 Farumskovene	Not sent	Applications for permits are sent by December 2025.
~~DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov~~	-	The hydrological projects of DK-02 will be implemented with other projects than the LIFE Open Woods project
DK-03 Gribskov	Permissions partly obtained for the grazing project (C3.1), and for 80 ha of hydrological projects (C4.1).	Applications for permissions for the remaining 23 ha of hydrological projects sent by December 2025. Obtaining the last permits on the fence from the local municipalities.
~~DK-04 Bidstrupskovene~~	-	The hydrological projects of DK-04 will be implemented with other projects than the LIFE Open Woods project
DK-05 Myrdeskov	Applications for permissions have been sent. Permit is given for the grazing project, and the permission from SGAV is granted, the permits from the munici-	Obtaining municipality permissions for hydrological projects.

	palities are not yet obtained.	
DK-06 Klinteskoven	Hydrological impact assessment completed. The hydrological impact assessments conclude that it is not possible to conduct the hydrological projects	-
DK-08 Almindingen	Not sent	Applications for permits are sent by December 2025.
DK-09 Hammersholm og Slotslyngen	All necessary permissions obtained.	-
DK-10 Pamhule Skov	Not sent	Applications for permits are sent by December 2025.
DK-11 Gråsten Dyrehave	Environmental screening is sent. The applications for the municipality not yet sent.	Applications for permits from the municipality are sent by December 2025.
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	Environmental screening is sent. The applications for the municipality not yet sent.	Applications for permits from the municipality are sent by December 2025.
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	All necessary applications for permits are sent.	Obtaining the permits.
DK-15 Velling Skov	All necessary applications for permits are sent.	Obtaining the permits.
DK-17 Livø	All necessary permissions obtained.	-
DK-18 Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund	All necessary permissions obtained.	-
DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	All necessary permissions obtained.	-
DK-20 Æbelø	All necessary permissions obtained.	-

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**New suggested deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50 % of permissions obtained	12/2024	7/2026	Delayed	Obtaining the remaining permits
All implementation plans prepared	7/2024		Completed	-
100 % of permissions obtained	12/2022	7/2027	Delayed	Obtaining the remaining permits

Saproxylic beetle baseline monitoring report (Germany)	12/2023		Completed	-

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Implementation plans for 7 project sites	7/2024	Completed	-
3 hydrological impact assessment studies	12/2024	Completed 2 assessment studies delivered	-
Saproxlic beetle baseline monitoring report (German)	12/2023	Completed	-

Action A3 Management agreements and applications for compensation schemes	
Foreseen start date: 01-08-2020	Actual start date: 01-08-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2022	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2023

The aim of this action is to facilitate preparation of applications for compensation schemes concerning conservation of hermit beetle habitats. All three agreements are consolidated. The action is done. The last management agreement with project site DK-23 was signed the 19/5 2025. It can be seen in appendix 4.

The action A3 contributes to fulfill the overall objective of *improving conservation status of the hermit beetle in four N2000 sites.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project result of *improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany)*. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Applications for compensation schemes submitted 1st time	6/2022	Completed	-
3 management agreements with land owners of sites with O. Eremita in DK signed	12/2023	Completed	-

Action A4 Revision of management and action plans	
Foreseen start date: 01-03-2022	Actual start date: 01-03-2022
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2023	Actual or anticipated end date: 30-06-2024

The aim of this action is to provide recommendations to the Natura 2000 planning based on the knowledge gained by the actions A1 and A2. The action has not progressed as foreseen. The deliverables of this action were handed in before the mission meeting in 2022, however declined, and new deliverables were requested. A change to the action was proposed and accepted with the last midterm report.

The milestones were changed from: Recommendations for management & action plans of 9 Danish Natura 2000 sites with O. eremita prepared and Recommendations for management & action plans of 18 Danish Natura 2000 sites prepared, to: Recommendations for action plans of 9 Danish Natura 2000 sites with O. eremita prepared, and Recommendations for action plans of 18 Danish Natura 2000 sites prepared. Furthermore, the following deliverable were deleted: Recommendations to the management plans of 27 Danish Natura 2000 sites

A webinar conducted in May 2023 covered the topic of recommendations based on LIFE Open Woods experiences. The staff of DEP and DNA producing the coming generation of Natura 2000 action plans attended the webinar, and thereby the recommendations to the Natura 2000 action plans were shared. Furthermore, the webinar power points including the recommendations from the LIFE Open Woods project to the Natura 2000 action plan are delivered as the deliverable "Recommendations to the action plans of 27 Danish Natura 2000 sites".

The action A4 contributes to fulfill the overall objective of *contributing to the development of the next generation of action plans for state owned forests in 23 N2000 sites in Denmark based on best practice on achieving favorable conservation status of habitats and species of EU concern.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project result of *21 drafts of next generation action plans (2021) for DK forests in N2000 prepared.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Milestone name	**Dead line**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Recommendations for action plans of 9 Danish Natura 2000 sites with O. eremita prepared	6/2024	Completed	-
Recommendations for action plans of 18 Danish Natura 2000 sites prepared	6/2024	Completed	-

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Recommendations to the action plans of 27 Danish Natura 2000 sites	6/2024	Completed	-

C – Conservation actions

Action C1 Creation of decaying wood habitats	
Foreseen start date: 01-10-2021	Actual start date: 01-10-2021
Foreseen end date: 30-06-2026	Actual or anticipated end date: 30-06-2026

The aim of this action is to improve the forest structure and ecological function. The action is on track. Generally, more has been implemented than expected. The action has been focused on selecting trees in areas of the forest close to existing or expected habitats for species, that would benefit from the habitats produced

by the action. The selected trees were typically between 30 and 60 cm in diameter and with little or none existing microhabitats. If possible, it was recommended to veteranize groups of trees to improve the possibility of developing potential habitats, and with different methods and positions on the trees supporting preferences for different species. The best practice veteranization methods applied are; mechanical induced surface damage, burning, mechanical induced cavities and partial damage to the crown. In addition, some artificial windfalls with partial uprooting have been made in a couple areas and experiences will be followed in the monitoring program for potential up-qualifying of the best practices catalogue. When implementing the methods it is important to not kill the tree. Deadwood is created with e.g. full cambium girdling as part of the action C2.1, but this is not a veteranization activity. This action was planned as a supplement to similar activities financed by the political approved budget for implementation of the designated untouched forests, with Open Woods funding an additional 2 trees/ha veteranized in the targeted areas within the project sites, adding app. 8 m3/ha of trees with decaying wood habitats. In the local implementation planning of the Open Woods activities it was recognized as more cost- effective to split the activities funded by different budgets in separate stands in the forests. Therefore veteranization in some stands are done as part of Open Woods activities with more than 2 trees/ha, but covering fewer hectares. The remaining hectares planned in this project will be veteranized using the budget for implementation of designated untouched forests. Note, that the number of trees listed in the table below under expected results differs from the appendix in the Grant agreement in regard to DNA project sites. The numbers below are the correct and relates to the targeted area per project site, with on average 2 trees/ha veteranized (adding app. 8 m3/ha of trees with decaying wood habitats). The number of trees listed in the Grant agreement were by mistake only the number expected to be done by external contractors, and not including the numbers done by DNA forest workers. The actual number of veteranized trees was based on a local assessment of relevant trees to be treated. Therefore, some project sites have less veteranized trees than foreseen, while others have more.

The action C1 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved; implementation plan for Bechsteins bat (Myotis bechsteinii) in one N2000 site prepared; improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig-Holstein (Germany); secured existing and future habitat for hermit beetle populations by: min. 370 veteran trees secured, 113 selected prunings, long-term management agreements with private landowners signed in 3 Danish N2000 sites; and preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-01 Farumskove	30 trees	33 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov	72 trees	131 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-03 Gribskov	804 trees	971 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-04 Bidstrupskovene	120 trees	62 trees veteranized.	Continuous veteranization.
DK-05 Myrdeskov	22 trees	43 trees veteranized.	Completed.

DK-06 Klinteskoven	32 trees	29 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-07 Ulvshale	18 trees	0 trees	Continuous veteranization.
DK-08 Almindingen	198 trees	241 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-09 Hammersholm og Slotslyngen	52 trees	49 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-10 Pamhule Skov	22 trees	27 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-11 Gråsten Dyrehave	14 trees	59 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	6 trees	18 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	152 trees	213 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	116 trees	41 trees veteranized.	Continuous veteranization.
DK-15 Velling Skov	50 trees	11 trees veteranized.	Continuous veteranization.
DK-17 Livø	4 trees	0 trees	Continuous veteranization.
DK-18 Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund	168 trees	565 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	40 trees	32 trees veteranized.	Continuous veteranization.
DK-20 Æbelø	40 trees	5 trees	Will be completed in the fall of 2025.
DK-21 Lekkende Dyrehave	10 trees	140 trees veteranized.	Completed.
DK-23 Sorø Sønderskov	10 trees	0 trees	Will be completed in the fall of 2025.
~~DK-24 Knuthenborg~~	100 trees	0 trees	-
Total	**2,084 trees**	**2,493 trees**	

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50 % trees veteranized	12/2023	Completed.	-
100 % trees veteranized	6/2026	-	The total amount of veteranization has been reached, but completion in all project sites will continue. There is still budget for more veteranization activities.

Action C2 Open woods - increasing structural diversity and control of alien species	
Foreseen start date: 01-04-2020	Actual start date: 01-04-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2026	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2026

The aim of this action is to remove shading trees around veteran and old valuable trees (C2.1), conduct thinning for future veteran trees (C2.2) and removing alien species (C2.3). The action is on track for action C2.1. For C2.2 a lower amount of activity than expected were conducted. For C2.3 there has been discussions on methods, and it might not be possible to conduct as much as expected.

The action C2 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved; implementation plan for Bechsteins bat (Myotis bechsteinii) in one N2000 site prepared; and preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

C2.1 Haloing veteran trees (removing shading trees around veteran trees) The actual number of treated trees is based on a local assessment of relevant veteran trees, where removal of shading trees is considered feasible for prolonging the life expectancy of the veteran tree. Therefore, some project sites will have less trees treated than foreseen, while others will have more. The action has focused on selecting the veteran trees with most existing or potential microhabitats, especially oak trees due to their potential for becoming very old and the many species relying on oaks as habitat. The methods used have primarily been felling of trees, full and partial cambium girdling of trees and veteranization, usually in that order working outwards in a perimeter around the veteran tree. In addition to reducing competition from neighboring trees and increase light around the veteran tree, deadwood has been added to the forest stands, both laying and standing deadwood by this action. The method has been adjusted for veteran trees with species vulnerable to drastic changes in microclimate i.e. exposure to sun/dehydration, for example species of moss and lichen. For example by only increasing light around part of the veteran tree.

C2.2 thinnings The thinnings that would improve the site conditions have been conducted, and it was assessed, that no further thinnings were necessary. Thus, the action is completed.

C2.3 controlling alien species The activity focuses on establishing knowledge on successful removal of alien species from the project sites, when they are considered a threat to the forest habitats. In this project, the main focus is on *Rubus spectabilis* in the project site DK-12, and regrowth of mainly alien coniferous species such as *Picea sitchensis* and maple in the other project sites listed in the table below. In May 2024, a workshop on prescribed burning was conducted to strengthen the knowledge on the method and to scan for possibilities within the project sites to try the method. Unfortunately, the project sites didn't have to qualities to conduct prescribed burning. This was either because the stands selected for the treatment is on peat soils which burns easily, and therefore is not suitable for prescribed burning, or because there wasn't enough flammable material in the stand. E.g. a good flammable material is a thick layer of grasses. Instead, more sites will conduct treatment of growth of maple in sites where it is considered problematic. This will improve the conservation status of the targeted forest habitat types. These sites are DK-07 and DK-13. See appendices 5 and 6 for program and workshop report.

C2.1 - Removing shading trees around veteran trees			
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-01 Farumskove	21-42 trees	21 trees	Completed.
DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov	102-204 trees	100 trees	Completed.
DK-04 Bidstrupskovene	111-222 trees	113 trees	Continuous treatment of veteran trees.
DK-08 Almindingen	54-108 trees	11 trees	Continuous treatment of

			veteran trees.
DK-10 Pamhule Skov	27-54 trees	28 trees	Completed.
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	45-90 trees	48 trees	Completed.
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	60-120 trees	61 trees	Completed.
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	24-48 trees	29 trees	Completed.
DK-15 Velling Skov	3-6 trees	0 trees	Continuous treatment of veteran trees.
DK-16 - Hald Inderø	9-18 trees	0 trees	Continuous treatment of veteran trees.
DK-18 Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund	6-12 trees	0 trees	Continuous treatment of veteran trees.
DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	20 trees	0 trees	Treatment of veteran trees.
DK-20 Æbelø	21 trees	10 trees	Conducting the remaining haloings in the fall of 2025
DK-21 Lekkende	110 trees	161 trees	Completed.
DK-22 Bognæs	130 trees	141 trees	Completed.
DK-23 Sorø Sønderskov	10 trees	0 trees	Conducting the remaining haloings in the fall of 2025
~~DK-24 Knuthenborg~~	120 trees	0 trees	-
Total	**873-1335 trees**	**733 trees**	

C2.2 - Increasing structural variation of tree plantations			
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-21 Lekkende dyrehave	11 ha	Completed 2.9 ha	No further activities
DK-22 Bognæs	20 ha	Completed 6.5 ha	No further activities
Total	**31 ha**	**9.4 ha**	

C2.3 - Removing of alien species			
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
~~DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov~~	7 ha alien species	0	Removed
DK-03 Gribskov	8 ha alien species	3.1 ha	Revising action
DK-04 Bidstrupskovene	8 ha alien species	0	Revising action
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	10 ha alien species	22.8 ha	Continued removal of *Rubus spectabilis*.
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	6 ha alien species	0	Revising action
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	20 ha alien spe-	11.5 ha	Revising action

	cies		
DK-15 Velling Skov	7 ha alien species	1.9 ha	Revising action
Total	**66 ha**	**39.3 ha**	

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Clearing of the area of alien species 1st time completed	12/2020	Completed	-
50 % shading trees around veteran and old trees removed	12/2022	Completed	-
50 % area planned for thinning conducted	12/2022	Completed	-
100 % shading trees around veteran and old trees removed	3/2026	On track	Further treatment of veteran trees.
100 % area planned for thinning conducted	12/2026	Completed	No further activities

Action C3 Establishment of grazing	
Foreseen start date: 01-07-2021	Actual start date: 01-07-2021
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2026	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2026

The aim of this action is to establish grazing in order to create structural variation and increase the natural dynamics as well as maintain effects of removal of the shading trees. The action has not progressed as foreseen due to the implementation of Nature National Parks in Denmark in some of the project areas and appointing of Untouched Forest in others. A new end date is suggested which is December 2026.

The action C3 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; and structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

DK-03: The site is a designated Nature National Park. There is still one permit missing for establishing the fence. It is expected that it will be obtained so the fence can be installed in 2026.

DK-04: The appointment of a Nature National Park on the site has affected the grazing activity. Due to the time schedules of the Nature National Park that exceeds the LIFE project period the activity has been relo-

cated to other relevant project sites. These are DK-05 Myrdeskov, DK-13 Stagsrode, DK-18 Skindbjerglund and Rold Skov, and an expansion at DK-03 Gribskov.

DK-18: The activity is completed in Skindbjerglund, but financed by other means. The original activity was based on the ownership of relevant areas during the application phase for this project and the designated untouched forest at the time. In the meantime, the neighboring property with over 100 ha came up for sale. This gave the opportunity of a grazing project on a much larger scale, as almost all of the state owned area now being grazed with livestock. The grazing project in Rold Skov is not yet implemented.

DK-19: The grazing with European bison is established. 4 animals from Denmark (from Randers Regnskov) were introduced in March 2019. The bull had to be put down in the fall. In April 2021 another 7 animals were donated from the Netherlands and then 3 from Randers Regnskov were introduced. 1 calf has been born. Another 5 animals from Knuthenborg Safari Park in Denmark were introduced in February 2022. 4 calves were born in the spring/summer of 2022, amounting to 20 European bison in total. All of the bisons were donated, and therefore no costs have been added to this part. By March 2025, there were 31 European bison in total, 13 cows, 13 bulls and 5 calves from 2024. This has required the construction of a release facility with a wooden boma and a holding pen (ca. 4.6 ha), and the replacement and/or reinforcement of stretches of the existing outer and inner fence, as well as two of the existing gates. The herd of bison in Tofte Forest at the middle of September 2025 counts a total of 34 animals of which more than half have been born in Tofte. Data has been collected on the welfare of the animals in terms of parasite burdens and levels of microminerals in blood, dung and fur samples. A complete mapping of genes in the herd has been carried providing information on levels of inbreeding and possible positive genetic diversification. Experience has also been gathered on subsidy feeding suitable for bisons on the type of soils present in Tofte Forest. Over two periods of time selected animals have been supplied with collars collecting information on herd movements and activity patterns. Together with information on plant cover this information will be used to assess the impact of bison grazing on nature values in Tofte Forest. More conclusive results on how bison grazing has affected various habitats will not be available until late in the project as the bison herd has had to grow initially to have any significant impact on a relatively big area with other species such as wild boar and red deer.

As a part of the introduction of the European bisons an advisory team have been established with the following members/consultants:

- VetConsult with the two veterinarians Monica Lønborg Frederiksen and Carsten Grøndahl. They are among the most experienced veterinarians both in Denmark and internationally when it comes to capture, release and monitoring of wild animals.
- Trine Hammer Jensen: Veterinarian from Aalborg Zoo and Aalborg University and as such a capacity in monitoring and investigating wild animal species and at the same time a local resource person.
- Faunaforst owned by Steffen R. Bengtsson with extensive knowledge of legal requirements and management of fenced areas with wild animals in Denmark.

It is expected that there will be increased expenses due to increased supervision of the animals, increased veterinary inspections, increased expenses on the monitoring of the animals behavior and animal welfare. Furthermore, there might be future unforeseen expenses for potential fence mending. The members of the advisory team were selected based on their professional background with special knowledge on veterinary issues relating to big wild animals from two of the largest Zoos in Denmark, including sedation, collecting of samples and monitoring of health issues. It is considered that it has not been possible to make a tendering process for this service because of the special requirements needed and the very few professionals available to provide this. A monitoring program for the European bison is carried out in close cooperation with the veterinary team. Experiences so far has shown that the animals have had problems gaining sufficient weight to give them the necessary layer of fat for the winter. Probable causes for this were found to be linked to a low availability of micro-nutients due to the relatively acidic soil in the Tofte area and an ongo-

ing adaption to the area for the animals. Therefore, it was decided in September 2023 to develop a new mineral supplement that the animals were more likely to eat in sufficient quantity and to start providing supplementary hay and feed. A specialist on feed products for grazing animals was contacted and has been providing advice as a consultant. At the same time fodder hedges and troughs were purchased and used to minimize the risk of parasite infection from fodder lying on the ground. The experience generated in the project has shown that a very important element of introducing a species such as the European bison into a new area is to understand how the animals can and will adapt. This includes understanding parasitic burdens, nutrition, adaptation and movements. This has led to a higher involvement of the veterinary team than what was initially foreseen in the project design. It is expected that there will be further costs like these in the remaining project period. It is considered a very important part of the project since it is part of gaining sufficient experience with management of European bisons as a way to secure more biodiversity. European bisons are currently being introduced to several natural areas in many parts of Europe and the herd in Tofte Skov can generate useful information on their requirements, effect on the vegetation, diseases etc. It is considered very important to maintain the involvement of the original advisory team because of their special skills and their knowledge of the animals. The budget for purchasing fence has been taken out of the project as requested in letter of June 2023, financial issue 3. It is suggested to spend some of the C3 budget on the above described veterinarian consultancy and necessary supplementary feeding for the European bison. Furthermore, it is suggested to transfer some of the budget to E5 dissemination for furthermore dissemination activities.

Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Expected results after revision proposal July 31st 2025**	**Status 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-03 Gribskov	App.1,122 ha	App. 1,300 ha	0 ha	Obtaining one last permit, establishing the fence and introducing grazing
~~DK-04 Bidstrupskovene~~	App. 317 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Removed.
DK-05 Myrdeskov	0 ha	App. 12 ha	12,2 ha	Completed
DK-06 Klintesko-ven	App. 112 ha	App. 112 ha	105,8 ha	Completed.
DK-13 Stagsrode	0 ha	App. 98 ha	0 ha	Obtaining permits and implementation.
DK-17 Livø	App. 57 ha	App. 54 ha	54,2 ha	Completed.
DK-18 Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund	App. 32 ha	App. 235 ha	172,1 ha	Skindbjerglund completed Rold Skov not yet completed
DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	App. 3,773 ha	App. 3,773 ha	3,750 ha	Completed Financed with other means.
~~DK-23 Sorø Sønderskov~~	App. 8 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Removed
Total	App. **5,421 ha**	App. **5,584 ha**	**4,094 ha**	

Milestone name	Dead-line	New sug-gested dead-line	Status 31st of July 2025	Expected activities un-til end of project
First grazing facili-ties purchased	6/2022		Completed.	-
50 % fences in-stalled	12/2022		Completed.	-
Grazing in place in 50 % of sites	12/2023		Completed. Grazing in place in DK-05, DK-06, DK-17, DK-18 and DK-19, corresponding to 57 %	-
100 % fences in-stalled	12/2024	12/2026	Delay expected.	
Grazing in place in 100 % of sites	3/2026	12/2026	Delay expected.	Grazing in place in DK-03, DK-13 and DK-18.

Action C4 Improvement of hydrological conditions	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2022	Actual start date: 01-01-2022
Foreseen end date: 30-06-2026	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-10-2027

The aim of this action is to improve hydraulics in sites where a relatively high groundwater table is an important feature or/and in the formerly drained land for forest production. The action has not progressed as foreseen due to the implementation of Nature National Parks in Denmark in some of the project areas and appointing of untouched forest in others. So far, the action has been implemented in two project sites. This is mainly due to the delay in obtaining the required permissions, as described under action A2 page 14, caused by the political changes with additional large state areas being set aside as untouched forest and Nature National Parks, and the changed procedure of obtaining permits from the SGAV. Due to the appointments of Nature National Parks in 5 project sites, and the changed procedure of obtaining permits for hydrological projects it is not possible do establish all the hydrological projects within the project period. This has formerly been elaborated on in page 10-11. The amount of hydrological projects that is possible to establish within the time frame of the LOW project have diminished. All hydrological projects will be conducted either way. It will just not be within the time frame of the LOW project and thereby not financed by the LOW project. The hydrological projects will be conducted in and financed by the Untouched Forest or Nature National Park projects instead. These have project periods from 6 to 25 years. The amount of hydrological projects that can be conducted can be seen in the table below.

An effort has been made to find compensational hydrological projects in other project sites. This has succeeded to some level, however, it was not possible to find a full corresponding amount of hydrological projects. Therefore, overall the amount of hydrological projects implemented in the project is lower. It was expected to implement hydrological projects on 662 ha, and after the revision, it is expected to implement 378 ha corresponding to approximately 57 %. Furthermore, the hydrological projects is expected to be more expensive to implement than anticipated in the grand agreement. This is due to several reason:

1. We are now more ambitious in the methodology. It was expected to primarily block the forest ditches, however, it is more efficient to fill the ditches entirely as the default method, and then only

conduct blocking when this is the best/only alternative. Filling a ditch instead of blocking it, restores the local forest soil moist much more efficiently.

2. We are conducting a higher amount of smaller projects. It is more expensive to create more and smaller projects due to the prices of the machinery that will have to move more around and be hired for more days.

Therefore, we expect to spend 75 % of the budget for the hydrological projects on the implementation of hydrological projects on 378 ha. The residual budget from this action would we like to spend on action C7, as there has been found a new population of the Hermit beetle in project site DK-02. This was not foreseen in the application process for the grant. As we have developed methods for veteranization targeting the hermit beetle we would like to perform these in the project site DK-02. Furthermore, we would like to conserve the existing habitat trees by haloing them to ensure sufficient light on the stems.
In the project a final seminar has not been planned or foreseen. If there is budget left from the C4 action after conducting the hydrological projects with improved methodology and the conservation actions for the new found population of the hermit beetle we would like to spend the residual budget on action E5, with a final seminar disseminating the project results to increase the possibility for replication and transferability. The final seminar will be conducted in 2027 as an international two-day event where LIFE projects from all over the EU will be invited. Furthermore, we are expecting to invite keynote speakers and potentially also keynotes from LIFE projects, that have experiences within the same field, to disseminate their project results. The travel and accommodation costs will be held by the participants, and the project will finance the conference facilities, catering etc. regarding the event. Should there be further residual budget it is proposed to spend it on upgrading the best practice guidelines with even more video material than already decided. The hydrological projects that were planned in the LOW project that will not be implemented with this project will be implemented with the projects NNP and Untouched forest, and thus the long-term goals of improvement will be met satisfyingly.

The action C4 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; and structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Expected results after revision proposal July 31st 2025**	**Status 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-01 Farumskovene	8 ha	4 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov	9 ha	0 ha	0	Removed
DK-03 Gribskov	220 ha	103 ha	49,2 ha	Awaiting permits.
~~DK-04 Bidstrupskovene~~	72 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Removed
DK-05 Myrdeskov	7 ha	7 ha	0 ha	Implementation
~~DK-06 Klinteskoven~~	14 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Removed
DK-08 Almindingen	110 ha	90 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.

DK-09 Hammersholm og Slotslyngen	11 ha	4 ha	1,7 ha	Completed
DK-10 Pamhule Skov	1 ha	2,25 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-11 Gråsten Dyrehave	3 ha	5,53 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	0,1 ha	0,1 ha	0,1	Completed. Financed by alternative funding.
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	27 ha	31,7 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	26 ha	13,66 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-15 Velling Skov	26 ha	5,26 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-18 Rold Skov, Skindbjerglund	17 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Awaiting permits.
DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	101 ha	101 ha	0 ha	Implementation
DK-20 Ærø	10 ha	10 ha	0 ha	Will be implemented in the fall/winter of 2025.
Total	**662,1 ha**	**377,5 ha**	**51 ha**	

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**New suggested deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50 % ditches blocked	3/2025	10/2026	Delayed	Applying for and obtaining permissions and then further implementation of the action.
100 % ditches blocked	9/2026	10/2027	Delay expected	Applying for and obtaining permissions and then further implementation of the action.

Action C5 Increasing connectivity and promotion of oak rejuvenation	
Foreseen start date: 01-07-2021	Actual start date: 01-07-2021
Foreseen end date: 30-06-2025	Actual or anticipated end date: 30-06-2026

The aim of this action is to improve the forest structure, connectivity and ecological function of fragmented target habitats as well as support oak rejuvenation and development of future habitats. Some modifications to the action were proposed and accepted with the latter midterm report. The action was modified and subaction C5.2 were converted to C5.1. The objective of this action is to increase the connectivity and promotion of oak rejuvenation and introducing flowering and/or thorny bushes and trees. During the knowledge collection, it has become clear that a key issue is that there is a lack of many important wooden flowering species. To improve the habitual conditions of key target habitats and to improve the condition for biodiversity the objective of this action should move towards reintroducing the missing local tree and bush species, where the main objective is to reinforce a sustainable seed source of the different species. Many of the

project sites are mainly even-aged, more or less monoculture beech stands, and therefore, many local woody species are missing for these to be considered natural forest habitats. Forest experts have developed lists for each project site listing the missing local species of flowering trees and bushes. From this material and the knowledge of the local foresters a number of planting models have been developed. Some of the local project managers were already working on developing planting methods for biodiversity purposes, and therefore, to use and share this potential knowledge for long-term survival of the targeted species a workshop was held in August 2022 on planting with an aim of reestablishing seed sources of local and missing woody plants. New models and methods were described for enrichment plantings. The milestones were modified as follows; C5.2 were removed as it is technically unnecessary to use another method for planting along forest edges. The methods of the developed planting models can be used in forest edges a well. C5.1, C5.3 and C5.4 will remain as they are. See the planting models in appendice 17.

The action C5 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved; improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany); and preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

DE-1: 368 single trees of *Quercus rubor* and *Tilia Cordata* have been planted. Some of the trees have been planted in patches with other tree species as well. These are *prunus avium, corylus avellana, crataegus monogyna, euonymus europaeus, prunus spinose, rhamnus carthartica, rhamnus frangula, rosa canina, viburnum opulus.* The detailed planning for Stodthagen is based on the soil conditions and conducted by the forester from the company Silva concept.

C5.1 – Planting of "stepping stones"				
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Expected results after revision proposal July 31st 2025**	**Status 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-01 Farumskove	1 patch	1 patch	0 patches	Implementation
DK-03 Gribskov	14 patches	14 patches	18 patches	Completed
DK-04 Bidstrupskovene	20 ha*	91 patches	85 patches	Implementation of remaining 6 patches
DK-08 Almindingen	7 ha*	12 patches	10 patches	Will be completed in the fall/winter of 2025
DK-11 Gråsten Dyrehave	5 ha*	13 patches	11 patches	Completed
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	3 patches	0 patches	0 patches	Removed
DK-13 Stagsrode Skov	9 patches	12 patches	11 patches	Completed
DK-16 - Hald Inderø	20 patches	5 patches	0 patches	Implementation of remaining 5 patches

DK-19 Tofte Skov og Høstemark Skov	15 patches	15 patches	10 patch-es	Completed
DK-20 Ærø	10 patches	10 patches	0 patches	Will be implemented in the fall/winter of 2025/2026
DK-22 Bognæs	0 patches	20 patches	6 patches	Completed
~~DK-23 Sorø Sønder-skov~~	20 patches	0 patches		Moved to DK-22
Total	**89 patch-es/32 ha***	**198 patches**	**151 patches**	

** Originally action C5.2.*

C5.3 – Planting of *Quercus petraea*			
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agree-ment)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DK-07 Ulvshale	1 ha *Q. petrea*	0,4 ha	Implementation of 0,5 ha will be conducted in the fall of 2025
DK-08 Almindingen	6 ha *Q. petrea*	7,3 ha	Completed.
Total	**7 ha**	**7,7 ha**	

C5.4 – Planting of oaks and limes			
Site name	**Expected results (Grant agree-ment)**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
DE-1 Naturwald Stodthagen und angrenzende Hoch-moore	130 trees	368 trees	Completed

Milestone name	**Dead-line**	**New sug-gested dead-line**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50 % of 'stepping stone' patches established	6/2023	12/2024	Completed	-
100 % of 'stepping stone' patches established	6/2025	6/2026	151 patches con-ducted corre-sponding to 76 %	Implementing the last plant-ing patches.
100 % of the area of *Quercus petrea* plant-ed	6/2025	10/2025	Implementation completed in the fall of 2025.	-

Action C6 Tree management for public safety	
Foreseen start date: 01-04-2022	Actual start date: 01-04-2022
Foreseen end date: 30-06-2026	Actual or anticipated end date: 30-06-2026

The aim of this action is to ensure the vitality of risk trees, so the trees become safe and simultaneously is

kept as living trees. The action is almost on track, however delayed due to changes of which project sites that can conduct the action.

The action C6 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; structure and ecological function of 9 forest habitats improved; improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany); and preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

DE-1: An annual risk tree inspection pointed out that there are some trees to be treated next season in end of summer and beginning of autumn 2026.

Site name	**Expected results (Grant agreement)**	**Expected results after revision proposal July 31st 2025**	**Status on 31st of July 2025**	**Expected activities until end of project**
~~DK-01 Farumskovene~~	20 trees	0 trees	0	Moved to DK-14
DK-02 Hellebæk, Teglstrup Hegn, Hammermølle Skov	30 trees	30 trees	37	Completed
DK-12 Augustenborg Skov	40 trees	10 trees	9	Completed
DK-14 Silkeborgskovene	0 trees	50 trees	35	Action is moved to this site from DK-01 and partially DK-12
DK-20 Æbelø	8 trees	8 trees	14	Completed
DE-1 Naturwald Stodthagen und angrenzende Hochmoore	15 trees	15 trees	0	Implementation
Total	**113 trees**	**113 trees**	**95 trees**	

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Assessment of 100 % of veteran/old trees accomplished	6/2026	The assessment will be conducted continuously	Implementation
Safety risk reduction interventions on 50 % of trees conducted	12/2023	Completed	-
Safety risk reduction interventions on 100 % of trees accomplished	6/2026	On track	Implementation

Action C7 Population management for hermit beetle	
Foreseen start date: 01/09/2019	Actual start date: 01/09/2019
Foreseen end date: 31/12/2022	Actual or anticipated end date: 30/06/2026

The aim of this action is to support existing populations of hermit beetle. The action has almost progressed as foreseen, however there have been some delays. 34 of 43 mould boxes have been put up in DK-21 and DK-22. It is expected to have the remaining boxes put up by June 2026. 10 trees have been acquired for artificial cavities specifically targeting the hermit beetle. These trees will be registered in the land register as ancient trees left in the area to natural decay. The price for this is incorporated in the budget. In the following the targeted veteranization methods are described**.** In DK-23 Sorø Sønderskov veteranization will be used to create a near-instant suitable habitat for the hermit beetle, while still conserving the integrity of the veteranized tree, ensuring a near-to-natural life-cycle. Each tree is considered as an individual case, were factors like shade, nearby veteran trees, tree diameter, species and structure will be taken into consideration when planning the exact veteranization. Two methods will be used:

1. Hollows carved out with suitable tools, leaving a small hole of entrance, with hollow-dimensions that will not result in killing the tree. The hollow will be carved into the trunk of the tree at the site of a sawed-off branch. This method will primarily be used on *Fagus sylvatica*. The hollow will be filled with a substrate of oak sawdust, leaves and water, which in a short period of time will create a habitat for saproxylic beetles including the hermit beetle, as seen in actual nests.
2. Hollows of larger volume, cut out of the trunk of the tree. The hollow of large dimensions will be added substrate of oak sawdust, leaves and water. This method will be used on larger (40-60cm diameter) sycamore trees, *Acer pseudoplatanus,* which shades veteran oak trees with and without confirmed populations of hermit beetles. This method will have a higher risk of killing or severely weakening the veteranized tree. As these trees provide a threat (shade) to already existing veterans, death of the tree will result in better conditions of these veterans. Even in the event of killing the veteranized sycamore tree, the large amounts of added substrate will create a temporary and much needed habitat for saproxylic beetles including the hermit beetle.

As described under chapter 6.1, C4, the hermit beetle has been found in DK-02 in 2024. We would like to propose to move some of the budget from C4 to C7 to conduct targeted veteranizations and haloings for the hermit beetle.

The action C7 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *improving conservation status of app. 1,855 ha of nine forest habitat types in 20 N2000 sites in Denmark by improving the structure and ecological function; Improve conservation status of the hermit beetle in four N2000 sites; contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark; and contributing to meet the Biodiversity 2020 targets.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *development towards favorable conservation status on ca. 7,571 ha of deciduous forest habitats, where ca. 1,855 ha are currently classified N2000 forest habitat types; improving of the conservation status of app. 50% hermit beetle populations in DK N2000 and entire hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany); secured existing and future habitat for hermit beetle populations by: min. 370 veteran trees secured, 113 selected prunings, long-term management agreements with private landowners signed in 3 Danish N2000 sites;*
connectivity of hermit beetle habitats increased by setting up mould boxes in two Danish N2000 sites; and preservation of genetic variability of hermit beetle population in Schleswig- Holstein (Germany) achieved by creation of mirror population in the project site DE-1 which is an N2000 site. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Site name	Expected results (Grant agreement)	Status on 31st of July 2025	Expected activities until end of project
DK-21 Lekkende	8 boxes	Completed. 8 boxes	-
DK-22 Bognæs	25 boxes	Completed. 25 boxes	-
DK-23 Sorø Sønderskov	10 targeted veteranizations	0 veteranizations	Will be conducted in the Fall/winter of 2025
DE-1 Naturwald Stodthagen und angrenzende Hochmoore	40 boxes	Completed. 39 boxes	36 small boxes and 3 large
Total	**83 boxes**	**72 boxes**	

Milestone name	Deadline	New suggested deadline	Status	Expected activities until end of project
50 % of the nesting boxes put up	7/2021		Completed.	-
100 % of the nesting boxes put up	6/2025	6/2026	Delayed. 63 mould boxes are established, corresponding to 76 % of expected results.	Implementing the targeted veteranizations in DK-23 and remaining 9 boxes in DK-22.

D – Monitoring of the impact of the project actions

Action D1 Monitoring of impact on habitats and species	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2020	Actual start date: 01-01-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2027

The aim of this action is to monitor the effects of actions C1-C4 and C6-C7. The action is on track.

All the monitoring actions are on track. The strategy was redelivered and accepted with the former midterm report. The tender of the final monitoring program is in the making and is expected to take place in the fall/winter of 2025.
The action D1 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark*. Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders*. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

C1 and C2.1: The monitoring of actions C1 and C2.1 are conducted at 3 project sites: DK-02, DK-06 and DK-13. Furthermore, a special monitoring program of tree lungwort (*Lobaria pulmonaria*) is conducted on project site DK-16. In DK-02 and DK-13 an extended monitoring baseline report on mosses and lichens were made to monitor how veteranization and especially haloing veteran trees will affect the development

of lichens and mosses. In DK-16 there is a population of tree lungwort (*Lobaria pulmonaria*), and therefore it was necessary to setup a specific monitoring program of this species to follow how the population will be affected by the activities. Furthermore, the program included a small experimental study on transplantation of the species to potential host trees.

C2.3: Salmonberry (*rubus spectabilis*) is an invasive species in DK-12. It is controlled by pulling and cutting it. Afterwards the area will either be covered by plastic or the ground will be milled. The cover of the invasive species is evaluated by counting the amount of plants removed at each treatment. This is done annually.

C3: The herd of European Bison in DK-19 is by the end of March 2025 numbering 31 animals - 13 cows, 13 bulls and 5 calfs from 2024. The herd is monitored by a veterinarian 2-4 times annually. The herd is monitored by local staff 3-7 times a week. Winter feeding takes place from end of September to early April and supplementary mineral feeding takes place all through the year. In the past two years dung has been collected to monitor parasite burdens. From November 2024 dung is collected from 10 specific animals on a regular basis to follow the parasite burden on a near monthly basis. The monitoring of parasites is aiming at finding out if there are individual differences between the animals in the susceptability to parasite infections. 4 animals were reequipped with GPS-collars to be able to track the herd movements and if possible relate their movements to both social behaviour and feeding patterns. Blood and fur samples were also collected from 10 bisons marked with individual ear tags and used for genetic mapping and health monitoring.

C4: The monitoring of hydrology was set up in DK-03 in 2023. The water loggers were set up before the hydrological projects were initiated to get data prior to the activity as well as during and after the implementation.

C6: The monitoring of the managed risk trees …

Bechsteins' bat The procedure for monitoring Bechstein's bats has been refined to overcome the technical challenges of detecting the species' use of roosts. Bechstein's bats are nearly impossible to confidently identify using acoustic detectors, as their calls overlap with those of several other Myotis species. To address this, a multi-method approach has been developed. Roost success will be assessed using a three-pronged strategy.

Firstly, roosts will be inspected by climbers able to access the cavities, which will then be examined for their physical characteristics to evaluate whether they provide a suitable microclimate for Bechstein's bats. Secondly, endoscopy will be used to check for signs of daytime roosting by Bechstein's (or other) bats, or other evidence of use (e.g., guano remnants, scratch marks, etc.). Finally, the third element is eDNA analysis of any guano remains found in or beneath the roosts. These samples will be sent to a laboratory in England, where DNA extraction and PCR amplification will be performed to determine bat species identity.

This methodology also has the added benefit of evaluating the roosts for use by other tree-dwelling bat species, thereby contributing to our understanding of the effectiveness of artificial roost creation as a compensatory habitat.

Saproxylic beetles, project site DE-1: The baseline monitoring of saproxylic beetle diversity in DE-1 was conducted in 2022. Due to 4 facts the monitoring was repeated:

3. It is known that a single monitoring in one year is only detecting about 70% of the beetle diversity.
4. In order to evaluate the effect of the boxes properly, it is required to get in best case a full census of the species, that could colonize the boxes.
5. To have a higher likeliness to get also rare species sampled.
6. In the first round the main focus was on oak in Wulfshagen and on beech in Stodthagen. In the second round this was tried to balance. Furthermore more tree species were included in the monitor-

ing.

The final monitoring will be done in 2027. It was initially planned to 2026, however, the data collection period will be too short then. Thus, it is moved to 2027. It is expected to deliver the final monitoring report in December 2027.

Action name	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
C1 – Veteranization	Baseline data collection completed for DK-02, DK-06 and DK-13.	Final data collection in 2027.
C2.1 – Increasing structural diversity	Baseline data collection completed for DK-02, DK-06 and DK-13.	Final data collection in 2027.
C2.3 – Control of alien species	On track.	Continued monitoring on removal of *Rubus spectabilis* in DK-12.
C3 – Grazing	On track.	Continued collection of data On Bison grazing in DK- 19.
C4 – Hydrology	Data collection started in DK-03 in 2023	Continuous data collection until 2027.
C6 – Tree management for public safety	On track	Surveying the survival rate of the treated trees.
C7 – Hermit beetle	On track	Final surveys
C1 – Bechsteins bat	On track	Final surveys

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until the end of the project**
Basic monitoring for habitat types and species completed	12/2020	Completed	-
Formulation of quantitative goals for improvement of conservation status of the targeted habitats and species – a strategy.	6/2021	Completed	-
Monitoring report about colonization of boxes by saproxylic beetles 2027 (German)	10/2027 New deadline: 12/2027	-	Monitoring and reporting
Final monitoring for habitat types and species completed	10/2027	-	Data collection

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Baseline report	12/2020	Completed	Completed.

A strategy for formulation of quantitative goals for improvement of conservation status of the targeted habitats and species both during and after the project	6/2021	Completed	Completed.
Final report	10/2027	-	The tendering process will be done in the fall of 2025 and then the data collection and reporting will begin in 2026-2027

Action D2 Ecosystem services and socio-economic surveys	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2020	Actual start date: 01-01-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2027

The aim of this action is to monitor the projects' effect on ecosystem services and socio-economic impacts. The project is expected to restore forest ecosystems, however, the trade-off is among other things timber production. The effect of some selected services will be analyzed. The action was revised after the last midterm report. There has been an ongoing orientation of the CINEA project advisor and ELMEN project monitor. The revision of the action was accepted the 07/06/2023. The revision is described below.

The action D2 contributes to obtain the project results of *awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders*. For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Socioeconomic assessment At the last midterm report, the socioeconomic assessment was proposed revised. This was accepted by CINEA with the response in letter 2023June_LIFE18 NAT DK 000747 MTR1LET 230516, issue 45. It was emphasized, that we should report clearly on the chosen indicators with this Midterm report. In January 2024, the revision was done and presented for the project monitor Camilla Strandberg Panelius. The revision was pre-accepted. In March 2024, a financial issue was raised. It was clear that to have the FLC conduct the socioeconomic assessment, the task had to be moved from DNA to FLC. On the Steering Committee meeting in May 2024 a plan for moving the task of the socioeconomic assessment from DNA to FLC was presented and discussed, and at a follow up meeting in June 2024 moving of the task was accepted. A description of the task was made, see appendix 8. On the 8th of May 2025 this was consolidated by an addition to the partnership agreement for the FLC, signed by steering committee member Rasmus Kjær, see appendix 8.

Ecosystem services There are no changes to this assessment. A PMG meeting will be conducted in November 2025 to concretize how to deliver the report.

Ecosystem service	Indicator	Comment	Partner
Provisioning service			
Timber	Change in tile revenue	Loss of timber revenue	DNA
Regulating service			
Soil processes	Change in CO2-emission and carbon sequestration	Reduction of green house gasses in untouched forests compared to production forests	DNA/AVJF
Structural ecosystem attributes	Amount of deadwood	Increase in deadwood	DNA/AVJF
Structural ecosystem attributes	Abundance of habitat trees of target species in improved condition	Increase in abundance	SGAV/SNSH
Cultural services			
Education	Educated foresters and forest workers as well as other land managers	Increase in employees educated in biodiversity management in forests	All partners
Recreational	Attractiveness of a site measured by uploaded photos to google earth at a project site and social media	Likes and comments	SNSH
Supporting services			
Biodiversity	Securing biodiversity/Saproxylic beetles	Suitable habitats	SNSH

Assessment of ecosystem services		
Ecosystem services	**Status**	**Expected activities until the end of the project**
Timber	Revised	Analysis in 2027
Soil processes	Revised	Analysis in 2027
Structural ecosystem attributes (Deadwood)	Revised	Analysis in 2027
Structural ecosystem attributes (Abundance habitat trees)	Revised	Analysis in 2027
Education	Revised	Analysis in 2027
Recreational	Re-	Analysis in 2027

	vised	
Biodiversity	Re-vised	Analysis in 2027

Socio-economic assessment		
Assessment elements	**Status**	**Expected activities until the end of the project**
Rising awareness from general public, residents and visitors on biodiversity forests and knowledge about the N2000 network result in increased knowledge and positive attitude towards the protection of the target species, and thus improve cooperation of public in the protection of their habitats.	On track	The University of Copenhagen will conduct the final data collection and survey and conduct the analysis for the socioeconomic assessment report. The final data collection will begin in 2026-2027, and the report will be delivered in 2027.
Building up a new discipline within education and in the end professional working with management of forest in appropriate way with regards to biodiversity and securing good conservation status for the forest types.	On track	Data on job positions and postings from each partner will be collected in 2027.
Project objectives will be communicated and is expected to rise more interest for seeing, experience and understand the nature more "wild". The increase in interest will be monitored by counting website visitors and adherence to specific tours arranged in the project.	On track	The University of Copenhagen will conduct the final data collection and survey and conduct the analysis for the socioeconomic assessment report. The final data collection will begin in 2026-2027, and the report will be delivered in 2027.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Before project surveys and analysis completed	12/2023	Completed	Completed
After project surveys and final report completed	9/2027	-	Survey, analysis, and reporting in 2026-2027.

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Assessment of Ecosystem Services report	9/2027	-	Analysis and reporting
Final socio-economic report	9/2027	-	Survey, analysis, and reporting in 2026-2027.

Action D3 Key Project Level Indicators (KPI)	
Foreseen start date: 01-10-2019	Actual start date: 01-10-2019
Foreseen end date: 31-09-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-09-2027

The aim of this action is to contribute to evaluating the impact of the project. The action is on track. The KPIs have been filled into the KPI database; therefore, consult the database for a status on this action.

Milestone name	Deadline	Status	Expected activities until end of project
Before project surveys and analysis completed	12/2021	Completed	-
LIFE Key project level indicators completed	9/2027	On track	-

E – Public awareness and dissemination of results

Action E1 Involvement of forest managers and private forest owners	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2020	Actual start date: 01-01-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2027

The aim of this action is to establish a Private Owners Network (POW) to increase the private owners' knowledge and understanding of forest ecosystems and management for threatened species and to increase the willingness to make agreements to secure core habitats for the hermit beetle and facilitate uptake of compensation schemes on biodiversity in forests. Furthermore, to produce best practice guidelines to publish in the end of the project period. The action is on track.

The action E1 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *building capacity, share best practice, increase and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs; and contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *guidelines for best practice prepared and disseminated; a Private Owners Network organized in Denmark of min. nine estate owners of land with hermit beetle populations. Aiming on increasing the private owners' knowledge on forest management for hermit beetle; recommendations for improvement of Danish compensation schemes for forest biodiversity prepared; and awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

The Private Owners Network

Three meetings have been conducted in the POW:

1. 16th of June 2020: A 2 hour kick off meeting on project site DK-22. The focus was an introduction to the project in general and the specific site.
2. 16th of June 2021: A one-day meeting on the project site DK-21. The focus was the biology of the hermit beetle (guided by an entomologist) and the best practice catalogue.
3. 24th of October 2024: A one-day tour with a focus on habitats for Saproxylic insects, visiting DK-04 and a private forest with Copenhagen Zoo as cohost. 31 people attended.

In 2025, SGAV plans to strengthen the relationships and sharing of knowledge within the private owner's

network through direct communication with the individual landowners and through study tours. The aim is to enhance the attendance of private owners to the events and including new relevant private owners as members.
Based on data collected through the NOVANA program, individual landowners will be contacted with an offer of a report on the data for their land. If desired by the landowner, a closer dialogue will be established regarding the management of biodiversity-friendly forestry and the management for the hermit beetle.
Furthermore, in 2025 two to three evening meetings will be conducted. This will be instead of a 1-day study tour. The reason for changing the format is to make the events more appealing to the private landowners, and hopefully increase attendance of the private landowners. The evening meetings are focusing on the following themes: 'Economics in Biodiversity', 'Subsidy Models and Certification', and 'Nature Data and Rules'.
Due to changes in the SGAV project management group members, the abovementioned events will be postponed to spring 2026.

Best practice catalogue
The best practice catalogue and the guidelines for private forest owners were originally thought to be to different publications in the format of printed, physical guidelines. In November 2023, a strategic meeting was conducted in the secretariat. Here it was discussed how best to disseminate the best practice. The idea of making a digital tool was presented. The advantages of making a digital tool is that it can target more user groups, and be oriented towards different user groups. Furthermore, it has a further reach and it is easier to bring into use in the field where the work is conducted. Also, it will allow for more ways of dissemination to be done including video instructions. It can even be produced in a way so it is possible to print, if one would like a physical version. It was concluded that a digital version has many advantages over the purely physical version. Therefore, the secretariat decided to continue working on conducting this change. In the following are listed the agreements that have been worked on to change the best practice into a digital version

- Approval of the change in the steering committee 16th of May 2024
  The steering committee accepted and agreed that a digital version would be preferable. Furthermore, an agreement was made, that the digital catalogue will be anchored on the webpage of the FLC and updated for a period of at least 5 years after the project has ended. This has a further advantage that the best practice of the project will be incorporated into the educational programs of the FLC ensuring continuous use, development and replication of the project knowledge. See agreement in appendix 8.
- First meeting with monitor 25th of November 2024. The projects monitor agrees on this being a good change.
- Informing the project advisor by e-mail on the 2nd of December 2024

This will not change the deliverables and milestones regarding the best practice. A working group constituting Amphi Consult, FLC and the DNA will structure the project knowledge collection and ensuring the quality of the digital product including production of relevant illustrations and video material. In the table below the detailed time plan is presented.

Deadline	Task
December 2025	Materials, knowledge products and structure on the digital catalogue completed
March 2026	Design draft completed
April 2026	Product draft completed
June 2026	Product test completed

November 2026	Product completed
March 2027	Deadline for deliverable

Anchoring of the digital best practice methods catalogue

The FLC hold the role of anchoring the best practice catalogue at their webpage including ongoing updates for at least 5 years. In May 2024 the steering committee was presented three different options of anchoring the digital best practice catalogue:

- To anchor the catalogue on the FLC webpage
- To anchor the catalogue on the DNA webpage
- To anchor the catalogue on its own webpage without further possibilities of ongoing updates

As the FLC is an educational institution, the steering committee found that the FLC would be the best host of the catalogue, as it would give the broadest reach and most replication of the project knowledge. The product will still be targeting forest managers, practitioners and private owners, and will be open source. On the 8th of April 2025 an addition to the partnership agreement for FLC was signed officially stating that the digital best practice catalogue will be anchored on the webpage of FLC. The official agreement is that when the LIFE Open Woods project has ended the digital best practice catalogue will still be anchored on the FLC webpage with other educational themes on nature management. It will have its own chapter being 'Biodiversitetsforvaltning i skov'[4]. The FLC commits to updating the site for minimum five years from project end date. The catalogue will be fully accessible for the public. To ensure a good product the FLC will take part in developing the digital best practice catalogue to ensure that it fits the FLC webpage. See appendices 7 and 8.

Milestone name	**Dead line**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
1st Private Owners Network meeting organized	6/2020	Completed.	-
1st of study tour organized	12/2023	Completed.	-
2nd study tour organized	12/2024	Completed.	-
3rd study tour organized	12/2025	Postponed to spring 2026	Conducting the activity
4th study tour organized	12/2026	-	Conducting the activity
Best practice guidelines published	3/2027	Working group and timeline for development established	Ongoing meetings in the working group and production of material
Guidelines for private forest owners published	3/2027	Working group and timeline for development established	Ongoing meetings in the working group and production of material

Deliverable	**Dead line**	**Status**	**Expected activities until the end of the project**

[4] Managing forests for biodiversity

Best practice guidelines	3/2027	Working group and plan for development established.	Ongoing meetings in the working group and production of material
Guidelines for private forest owners	3/2027	Working group and plan for development established.	Ongoing meetings in the working group and production of material

Action E2 Competence development on forest management for habitats, species and biodiversity	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2020	Actual start date: 01-01-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2023	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-03-2022

The aim of this action is to disperse knowledge on forest management for biodiversity purposes among the employees of the projects partners. The action is completed. With the political decisions on appointing Nature National Parks and further areas as untouched forests, there was an increased relevance and need for a competence course on how specific actions can be used to develop favorable conservation status for forest habitat types and species, thereby supporting the implementation decisions in the management plans. Since the course would be relevant for a majority of the employees in DNA, it was decided to appoint a focus group with participants from both the management and technical level in DNA to support FLC in the development of the course. The courses were developed as a diploma course (10 ECTS) for forest managers and three practical adult vocational training courses for forest and nature technicians, machine operators and contractors. Based on input from the focus group it was decided to conduct them as a coherent course. The objective was expected synergies in ensuring the same focus and knowledge for all participants and the possibilities for discussing the biodiversity management in forests across the fields of competences. The content of the courses focused on two scenarios for management of forests for biodiversity purposes: Areas with existing biodiversity, which should be conserved or improved; and areas with only marginal biodiversity, where the aim is to kick-start natural processes supporting higher biodiversity. The courses were completed as 4 joint modules (2 days each) from November 2021 to April 2022, supplemented with a final written paper in the diploma course and a 5th module with practical tests for the adult vocational training courses. Modules 1 and 4 were held at FLC for all participants, introducing basic knowledge about management of biodiversity in forests, monitoring and documentation, and legal framework etc. Module 2 and 3 were held regionally at local DNA sites, mainly LIFE Open Woods project sites, focusing on concretes cases related to the two scenarios.

The action E2 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *building capacity, share best practice, increase and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
1st course held	12/2023	Completed	-
2nd course held	12/2023	Completed	-
3rd course held	12/2023	Completed	-

Action E4 Capacity building for partners and networking with other LIFE and non-LIFE projects	
Foreseen start date: 01-10-2019	Actual start date: 01-10-2019

Foreseen end date: 31-12-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2027

The aim of this action is to facilitate exchange of experience, networking, involvement and ownership among the partners. Through this action, experiences and knowledge gained during the project will be disseminated. This will also encourage replication of the project methodology. The action is on track.

The action E4 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *building capacity, share best practice, increase and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs; and contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark.* Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Workshops: In September 2025, a study tour and workshop took place in Schleswig-Holstein. The focus was on the activities of SNSH. The primary theme was the hermit beetle and included discussions on management practices, practical experiences, and field trips to visit sites in the region where populations are present and managed. A secondary topic covered woodland restoration techniques in young woodlands and plantations, as well as woodland succession under grazing regimes. The German forest practitioners had changed their practices after the study tour to Sweden in 2023. There was a positive feedback on the workshop. See the program in appendix 13.

Networking activities In the table below, all the networking activities from 2022-2025 are listed.

Year	Month	Partner	Description
2025	September	DNA	Nordic-Baltic LIFE Platform meeting
	August	DNA	The local office of Søhøjlandet presented LIFE Open Woods on a meeting in the local Green Advisory board
	June	DNA	Participation in LIFE Platform Meeting on Forest Restoration in Europe - Scaling up efforts for biodiversity enhancement and climate resilient landscapes in Romania
	May	DNA	Represented in the LIFE tent at the People's Festival of Nature[5]
	May	DNA/SNSH/Amphi	Attending the 12th European Symposium on Saproxylic Ecology
	January	SGAV	Information meeting regarding compensation schemes in forest
2024	September	DNA/FLC	Nordic-Baltic Platform meeting in Riga, Latvia
	September	DNA	14th European Conference on Ecological Restoration

[5] The peoples' festival of Nature is a fair on nature where both the public and professionals attend. It has 30,000 visitors, 500+ debates, conversations and activities, and 70 stands.

	May	DNA	Represented in the LIFE tent at the People's Festival of Nature
	May	DNA/AVJF/SN	Arranging a LIFE Open Woods workshop on prescribed burning in DK-19
	April	SNSH	BNUR Seminar: habitat trees and management; talks and excursion.
2023	September	SNSH	Attending the 11th European Symposium on Saproxylic Ecology
	September	DNA	Nordic-Baltic Platform meeting in Helsinki, Finland
	September	DNA	Presenting the LIFE Open Woods project on the FLC's annual Nature Management Conference[6]
	May	DNA/DEP	Represented in the LIFE tent at the People's Festival of Nature
	May	AVJF	Excursion to DK-19 for 40 members of the DNA network on management of open landscapes focusing on grazing with bison.
2022	November	SNSH	Participation in webinar: Insektenschtz im Wald, Maßnahmen für Föderung von Insekten und rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen.
	November	DNA	LIFE Open Woods participated in the first workshop, of more to come, in the INFOBIOM network on the 24th-25th of November 2022. INFOBIOM focuses on developing methods for biodiversity monitoring in forest ecosystems and is organized by NIBIO and includes NINA, LUKE, SYKE, SLU, University of Copenhagen, and University of Aarhus as partners.
	October	DNA	LIFE Open Woods were represented on the LIFE Platform meeting, which took place in Klaipeda, Lithuania. LIFE Open Woods contributed with a presentation of the competence course on forest management for biodiversity purposes.
	August	DNA/AVJF	Conducting a project workshop on planting for biodiversity was hosted by LIFE Open Woods on the 11th of August 2022. The participants were employees of DNA, local project managers of LIFE Open Woods and AVJF. This was very fruitful and led to a production of four models for planting for biodiversity which will be include in the

[6] The Nature Management Conference is hosted by FLC and focuses on management of the natural processes and dynamics. This year the following themes are discussed: Natural processes; restoration of light-open oak forests, restoring raised bogs.

			best practice catalogue.
	July	DNA	LIFE Open Woods was represented at the International Congress of Entomology, 17 – 22 July 2022 in Helsinki, Finland.
	May	DNA	LIFE Open Woods attended The People's Festival of Nature[1] 2022 in May, which is a national political meeting that lasts 3 days with an agenda of nature. 30.000 people visited the The People's Festival of Nature in 2022, among the participants are notably politicians, political parties, non-governmental organizations, universities, and state institutions. LIFE Open Woods organized, in corporation with other LIFE projects in Denmark, a stand presenting the LIFE initiative and the concrete projects. In the occasion of the 30-year anniversary of the LIFE program Mrs. Sylvia Barova participated in the The People's Festival of Nature 2022 and gave a speech on the LIFE program.
	May	DEP/SNSH	Employees of DEP and SNSH participated in the final seminar of LIFE Bridging the gap on May 31st to June 2nd 2022.

Milestone name	**Dead line**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50% networking activities held	12/2024	Completed	-
1st workshop held	12/2025	Completed. Workshop in Germany 29th-30th of September 2025	-
2nd workshop held	12/2026	Workshop in England planned for 2026	Planning and conducting the workshop
100% networking activities held	12/2027	-	Continuous networking activities planned

Action E5 Dissemination to public and info materials	
Foreseen start date: 01-01-2020	Actual start date: 01-01-2020
Foreseen end date: 31-12-2027	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-12-2027

The aim of this action is to disseminate the project to the general public. The action has not progressed as foreseen due to some changes and delays caused by COVID-19. The main reason for the delays in this action is the restrictions following the pandemic, and a need for digital dissemination, which partly was realized because of the pandemic, however, the digital dissemination have other advantages as well such as reaching a larger part of the general public.

The action E5 contributes to fulfill the overall objectives of *building capacity, share best practice, increase*

and update knowledge and experience as well as awareness among site managers, landowners, state administration, students, public and NGOs; and contributing to lower barriers in Danish compensation schemes uptake by private estate owners to secure habitats of hermit beetle populations in Denmark. Furthermore, it contributes to obtain the project results of *awareness and knowledge about best practice management of forest habitats and habitats of hermit beetle increased among stakeholders.* For an overview of which actions that contribute to obtaining which objectives and long-term results see appendix 16.

Info boards: Almost all the info boards have been set up at the project sites. The sites that are still missing info boards are DK-19, DK-20 and DK-23. The reason for this is that AVJF has selected both Lille Vildmose (DK-19) and Gyldensteen/Æbelø (DK-20) for testing of a new concept for signposting and welcoming facilities. The aim is to include signs from the LIFE Open Woods project in the new concept. It is expected that the signs will be installed in 2025-2026. For DK-23, the management agreement was not signed until recently. Now that it is signed it is possible to set up the info board. A new deadline of December 2026 is proposed.

Revision nature dissemination event: With the former midterm report it was accepted to revise the milestone of initial public excursions. The revision was done in the fall of 2024 and was proposed to and preliminarily accepted by the CINEA project advisor and ELMEN project monitor (December 2024). In the following, the revision is described. Instead of initial public excursions a nature dissemination event was developed. It was ready in May 2025 and a launch event was conducted the 29th of June 2025. The nature dissemination event is inspired by outdoor escape rooms. A company that develops escape room experiences was chosen to develop the nature dissemination event. The experience consists of four backpacks filled with riddles and a sound story to follow. Furthermore, a facilitator's guide was developed. The experience is designed so up to 100 people can experience it during one workday. Furthermore, it is designed so an employee can facilitate the experience just by using the facilitator's guide and the experience material. It can be applied to different sites as long as there is a veteran tree, a haloing and a conifer stand within a short walking distance. The experience is called the Nature Mystery and offers knowledge about wild natural forests, associated species, veteran trees, veteranization and haloing to people who have no pre-existing knowledge on nature. The target group is families who generally do not go out to experience nature. See the full description in appendix 9. The Nature Mystery was launched on the 29th of June 2025 in DK-14, a forest close to a larger city (Silkeborg). 52 people attended the event and the response was positive. Furthermore, by doing an evaluation it was discovered, that the target group had been reached. Several of the attendees expressed, that they do not normally go to the nature, but this event had attracted their attention. To create awareness of the events' existence advertisement in local newspapers, local Facebook groups and the local DNA office newsletter were done. The evaluation showed, that all the different media had been used by the attendees to sign up for the event. There has already been two requests from project partners and others to borrow the Nature Mystery for dissemination. Because of the scope of the usability of the Nature Mystery, it is proposed upgraded to a deliverable with the last midterm report. Proposal of status as deliverable:

Deliverable: The Nature Mystery – a riddle hunt in the wild forest; Deadline: 5/2025

Leaflet: The leaflets in Danish, English and German have been produced.

Site specific leaflet: It is assessed that a site specific leaflet is redundant. All project sites are presented on the website and with the info boards. It will be more valuable to use the budget on other dissemination activities such as replicating the nature dissemination event and upgrading digital dissemination. Therefore the milestone is proposed removed.

Dissemination activities of DK-24 taken over by Copenhagen ZOO: The dissemination activities of the former project site DK-24 were taken over by Copenhagen ZOO. Copenhagen ZOO created a dissemination product and launched the product at The People's Festival of Nature 2023. The different elements of

the product is seen in the table below and in appendice 10. The People's Festival of Nature, where the dissemination product were launched, is visited by approximately 30.000 people, whom are a mix of professionals and the general public. Afterwards the dissemination product was included in their general exhibitions and act as a course in their school program. Approximately 1 million people visit Copenhagen ZOO each year, and the children's holiday camp programs are popular and active in all the school breaks during the year (Easter, summer and autumn vacation). The Copenhagen ZOO has delivered some data on how much the activities have been used so far, se the table below.

Activity	**Participants** (May 2023 - May 2025)
Playing papers on the hermit beetle (see appendix 10)	4,372
The wooden stomp activity	1,521
Live like the hermit beetle memory game	933

Presence on social media In July 2023, it was decided to create a LinkedIN page for the LIFE Open Woods project to increase awareness of the project. Since then the page has gotten 643 followers.

Videos 14 videos have been produced and they were published during 2021 and 2022 on YouTube. By the last midterm reporting (March 2023) the videos had been viewed 24,000 times in total. By July 2025 the videos have been seen 43,800 times. Furthermore, the videos are being used at different events such as the People's Festival of Nature, and when DNA disseminate nature management activities in the Nature National Parks.

Name	**Release**	**Views** (7/2025)
LIFE Open Woods – introduction	3.3.2021	1,720
LIFE Open Woods – introduction in English	1.3.2021	502
Open Woods: Mere lys og vand skal sikre biodiversiteten i Danmarks skove (More light and water to ensure the biodiversity in the Danish forests)	27.2.2020	1,598
LIFE Open Woods // Sådan skaber vi bedre forudsætninger for biodiversiteten i skoven (How to create better preconditions for the forest biodiversity)	27.2.2022	632
Fremtidens skov // Sådan kan en urørt skov udvikle sig fra spire til genfødsel (The future forests // How an untouched forest develops from sprout to rebirth)	16.3.2022	2,491
Skoven som økosystem // Græsning og vand giver dynamik, variation og plads til skovens biodiversitet (The forest ecosystem // Grazing and water provide dynamics, variation and space for the forest biodiversity)	25.10.2021	9,837
Skovens strukturer // Fra produktionsskov til urørt skov (The forest structure // From production forest to untouched forest)	25.10.2021	6,081
Skovens træer og arter // Større variation – mere plads, flere arter (The trees and species of the forest // More variation, more space, more species)	25.10.2021	5,623
Eremit // Vores arbejde for at bevare de sjældne arter // LIFE Open Woods (The hermit beetle // Our work on conserving rare species)	27.9.2022	1,604
Bechsteins flagermus // Vores arbejde for at bevare de sjældne arter // LIFE Open Woods (The Bechstein bat // Our work on conserving	27.9.2022	741

rare species)		
Europes largest wild animal // The return of the European Bison in Denmark	3.9.2021	9,811
Kompetenceudvikling // Fra produktion til urørt skov // LIFE Open Woods (Competence development // From production forest to untouched forest)	17.8.2022	1,224
Mere vildskab på CV'et (A more wild resume)	16.8.2022	253
LIFE Open Woods – Det praktiske arbejde, Hald Inderø (The practical work, Hald Peninsula)	1.3.2021	1,674

Because of the scope of the usability of the video material, it was upgraded to a deliverable with the last midterm report. Proposal of status as deliverable:

Deliverable: 14 videos disseminating LIFE Open Woods; Deadline: 9/2022

Professional communication: On the secretariats' strategic meeting in November 2024, it was decided to upgrade the communication of the project. The reason for this is to increase the knowledge of the existence of the project. This requires a strategic approach. The aim is to increase the knowledge of the project here and now but also to ensure that the project is well known when the project ends. The aim is to have a wide reach when the final publications are published to ensure that the project knowledge will reach the practitioners, the private landowners, the students, and the public. By building up the knowledge over time, the project will have a good platform from which to inform about the final publications and results. Therefore, a professional external communications consultant has been associated to the project. The consultant is Janne Bavnhøj who also consults the LIFE project LIFE 4 Forest. She will be associated to the project from April 2025 to December 2027. The 24th of April 2025 a kick-off communications workshop was conducted to create a strategic approach for external communication and dissemination for the period 2025-2027. All project partners were invited and DNA and SGAV participated. On the workshop, a core story of the project was made. Furthermore, the target groups and receiver groups of the strategic communication were identified. Lastly, an action plan was made, in detail for 2025 and in headlines for 2026-2027. See appendices 11 and 12.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**New suggested deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
50 % public excursions held	12/2021		Completed	-
Info boards installed in all the project sites	12/2024	12/2026	Installed in all sites beside DK-19, DK-20, DK-23	Installing the remaining signs in 2026
Layman report printed	6/2027		-	Producing report
100% public excursions held	6/2027		-	Conducting excursions

Deliverable	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
A general leaflet (DK: 2000 cop./ENG:1000cop.)	8/2020	Completed	-

Flyer about project German	5/2023	Completed	-
Site specific leaflet (DK: 1000 cop.)	12/2024	Proposed re-moved	-
Layman report	6/2027	-	Producing report
Flyer project results Ger-man	12/2027	-	Producing flyer
14 dissemination videos	9/2022	Completed	-

F – Project management

Action F1 Project management	
Foreseen start date: 01-07-2019	Actual start date: 01-07-2019
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2028	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-03-2028

The aim of this action is to make strategic decisions concerning project implementation and resources, and have an overall control of the progress and approval of major changes and corrective actions in the project. The action is progressing as foreseen.

The Steering Committee has had six meetings:

1. 11th of November 2020.
2. 25th of March 2021.
3. 30th of March 2022.
4. 2nd of March 2023.
5. 16th of May 2024.
6. 21st of October 2025.

The project management group has had nine meetings:

1. 12th of May 2020.
2. 29th of October 2020.
3. 1st of March 2021.
4. 12th of November 2021.
5. 14th of August 2023.
6. 6th of February 2024.
7. 29th of October 2024.
8. 27th of November 2024.
9. 20th of February 2025.

The project has had four **mission meetings** with the project monitor (ELMEN/CINEA):

1. 28th of May 2020 (virtual)
2. 14th-15th of April 2021 (virtual).
3. 19th-20th of April 2022.
4. 1st-2nd of October 2025.

The **project secretariat** meets online biweekly and physically when needed to discuss progress and specif-ic matters. Furthermore the project manager has a close dialogue with the associated beneficiaries, and supports them in clarification of technical or financial questions or issues.

Milestone name	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Expected activities until end of project**
Steering group organized	10/2019	Completed	-
Project manager assigned and project management group set up	10/2019	Completed	-

Deliverable	Dead-line	Status	Expected activities until end of project
Mid-term report	4/2023	Completed	
Mid-tem report	10/2025	On track	Delivered
Final report	3/2028	-	Compiling and deliver

Action F2 Revision	
Foreseen start date: 01-07-2027	Actual start date: 01-07-2027
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2028	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-03-2028

The aim of this action is to ensure a certificate on the financial statements and accounts are produced. DNA, SGAV and AVJF all have requested payment as reimbursement of actual costs, and/or estimated budgets above the threshold. These partners will deliver a certificate on the financial statements and accounts. The audit reports will be completed after the end of the project and submitted together with the final report, to certify that all costs incurred respect national legislation and accounting rules as well as the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Milestone name	Deadline	Status
Audit is started	1/2028	-

Deliverable	Deadline	Status
An audit report	2/2028	-

Action F3 After LIFE plan	
Foreseen start date: 01-07-2027	Actual start date: 01-07-2027
Foreseen end date: 31-03-2028	Actual or anticipated end date: 31-03-2028

The After-LIFE plan will describe how the long-term management, dissemination, replication and communication of the project will ensure the maintenance of the actions and the results carried out in the project and how they will continue after end of the project. Amphi Consult will coordinate the preparation of the plan with contribution from all other partners. The action secures production of obligatory project document: The After- LIFE Plan.

Deliverable	Deadline	Status
After LIFE Plan	3/2028	-

6.2 Main deviations, problems and corrective actions implemented

Some deviations of significance have occurred, however, there are no issues that are expected to affect the overall implementation of the project. Some delays have occurred. Some because of COVID-19 and some because of the political changes described in detail in chapter 5 page 10. In the following the main issues and changes to the project will be elaborated.

A2 Application for permissions and implementation plans

Obtaining the permissions for C3, grazing and C4, hydrology have been delayed. This is due to the political decision of establishing the 15 NNPs, appointing large areas as untouched forest and a change in the process for obtaining permits from the authority SGAV. The LIFE Open Woods project management are in close dialogue with the project management of the NNP and untouched forest projects to, at the best of our ability, prevent further complications of the three simultaneous and closely related projects. The main office of DNA and SGAV are in an ongoing dialogue about the process for obtaining permits.

C1 and C2 One-off compensation for purchasing trees at DK-23

During the project it became clear in 2022, that for conducting veteranization and haloing on site DK-23, the land owner demanded a transaction due to the economic losses associated with converting the trees from production trees to trees for natural decay. An economic model was developed for this purchase.

C3 Establishment of grazing

Due to the establishment of Nature National Parks some geographical changes will occur for and the action. It has been assessed where to move the activities to, and new suitable sites have been found within the existing project areas. For further details on the Nature National Parks see chapter 5 page 10.

C4 Improvement of hydrological conditions

Due to the appointment of Nature National Parks overlapping with LOW project sites, and the prolongation of obtaining permits for hydrological projects due to the changed procedure for obtaining permits by the authority SGAV, many of the hydrological projects had to be taken out of the project. Thus the amount of hydrological projects have gone from 662 ha to 377 ha.

C7 Population management for hermit beetle 10 specialized veteranizations will be conducted instead of setting up mould boxes, due to the owners reluctance towards the boxes. This will provide valuable new knowledge on how to conduct veteranizations specialized for the hermit beetle.

E1 Private owners network

It is challenging to engage the private owners network sufficiently.

E5 Changes to the dissemination activities

There has been some changes throughout the project regarding dissemination. Video material was produced in the beginning of the project, a nature dissemination event has been produced instead of conducting the initial public forest tours, and a professional communications consultant has been supporting the project from 2025 to ensure efficient and strategic communication and also to help engage the private owners network.

F1 Change of project owner and further changes to the PMG group

By the 1st of July 2024 a new project owner took over for the former project owner Peter Brostrøm. The new project owner is Uffe Strandby. Furthermore, there has been some changes to the PMG group in this reporting period. For SGAV both PMG members have left the project, and one new have taken over the responsibilities. For Amphi consult the PMG member changed as well.

6.3 Evaluation of Project Implementation

The overall progress of the project implementation is going according to the plan, however, there have been three matters that have caused some severe delays to the project. These are the COVID-19, the implementation activities of the politically decided Nature National Parks and extension of Untouched Forest sites, and the changed procedure of obtaining permits from the authority SGAV. These matters are formerly described in this report. Despite the abovementioned challenges, we expect to reach the objective of improvement of the forest habitat types. Some activities that are planned will not be implemented with the LIFE Open Woods project, but will be implemented by other projects in the same sites.

6.3.1 Methodology

Action	Success/Challenge
C1 Veteranization	Some veteranizations can be used in year one, some develop microhabitats over a longer time span. It differs with location and tree species how severe the activity can be to maintain tree vitality. It was more cost-efficient than expected to veteranize in the crown.
C2 Haloing	Using ringing as a method for haloing is effective for inhibiting regrowth in the open conditions. The veteran trees react to the changed light conditions (e.g. setting new branches). There are indications that oak react more positively than beech. The light gaps must be large, and at the same time this can provide negative microclimatic changes. This is dependent on the location and local species composition.
C5 Plantings	The plantings have been established successfully. The prices were lower than traditional fencings as expected. It is too soon to conclude whether the planting models are technically efficient
C6 Risk trees	The methods for risk tree management have been implemented successfully. It is too soon to conclude on survival rate/life prolongation.
C7 Mould boxes	Ongoing maintenance is needed to ensure that the boxes are filled with material, and that the boxes are maintaining optimal moisture conditions

6.3.2 Actual results compared to objectives and expected results

Actual results compared to objectives and expected results				
Action sub components completed	**Foreseen in the project proposal**		**Achieved results**	**Evaluation**
	Action objectives	**Expexted results**		
A1 Best practice methods catalogue and distribution among partners	Standardization of implementation of C- actions and common understanding of the methods to be implemented in the project among the project actors.	Best practice will be consolidated from relevant projects and publications.	The best practice methods catalogue is distributed among project partners. Furthermore, it is available online to meet the general interest in the matter from municipalities and private entrepreneurs and landowners.	The best practice methods catalogue meets the goals and expected results. Because of the general awareness in the field regarding forest management for biodiversity purposes the catalogue will come in a sec-

				ond edition based on the ongoing project knowledge sharing.
A1 1st study tour organized	To support understanding of the methods, level out novelty barrier, gather practical experience and validate methods as well as facilitate involvement of the site managers and forest workers to see how methods were/are implemented in practice.	Conduct the study tours with app. 18 participants each	The first study tour was converted to 4 webinars due to COVID-19	The webinars met the objectives
A1 2nd study tour organized			The second study tour was conducted with 24 participants	The study tour met the objectives
A2 Hydrological impact assessment studies	Ensuring the feasibility of conducting the hydrological projects on more complicated sites	Conducting 3 assessments	2 assessments were conducted as the third was not necessary due to local assessments	The assessments met the objectives
A2 Saproxlic beetle baseline monitoring report	Obtaining detailed knowledge on saproxylic life in DE-01	Conducting 1 baseline report	1 report was conducted	The report met the objectives
C1 50 % trees veteranized	The action aims on creating a representation of all successive stages in decay on the sites	Conducting 1,042 veteranizations	2493 have been conducted (120 %)	The veteranizations met the objectives and was cheaper to conduct than expected
C2 Clearing of the area of alien species 1st time completed	Preventing that the unwanted species become dominant in the forest habitats	No regrowth	The first clearing was achieved successfully.	The first clearing was achieved successfully. It is not yet possible to evaluate on regrowth.

C2 50 % shading trees around veteran and old trees removed	Preserving the valuable ecological features of the habitat trees and secure their survival	Min. 873 trees treated	742 trees treated (85 %)	The treatment met the objectives.
C2 Methods for controlling unwanted species (prescribed burning)	Preventing seeds by burning the areas. Removing alien coniferous species will prevent these species from spreading into the surrounding habitat types.	Removing species with prescribed burning among other methods	A workshop was conducted making it clear that there were no suitable sites for prescribed burning. Knowledge collection on prescribed burning.	It was not possible to conduct prescribed burning as a method.
C3 European bisons introduced in DK-19	It is expected by University of Copenhagen that bison can promote biodiversity thanks to supplementing existing wild grazers.	Introducing the european bison in DK-19	The European bisons were introduced in 2021, and currently the herd contains 34 animals.	Experience has been gathered on animal welfare and subsidy feeding. Ongoing GPS data collection.
C3 50 % fences installed and Grazing in place in 50 % of sites	Ensuring disturbances in the habitats that are currently missing.	Introducing grazing in 6 sites (revised to 7), 5 (6) state owned and 1 private, totally	Grazing introduced in 4 sites (57 %) – 3 state owned sites and 1 private owned	The grazing met the objectives
C5 50 % of 'stepping stone' patches established	Improving structure, connectivity and ecological function of fragmented target habitats	89 patches established (revised to 198)	151 patches conducted. Testing new methods for plantings focusing on planting future seed sources.	The enrichment plantings met the objectives.
C5 100 % of the area of *Q. petrea* planted	Support oak rejuvenation and development of future habitats	7 ha plantings	7,7 ha conducted	The sessile oak rejuvenation met the objectives.
C6 Safety risk reduction interventions on 50 % of trees conducted	Performing habitat tree assessment to assure risk reduction and habitat retention, reducing risk to public safety around trees and maintaining the habi-	113 trees treated	95 trees treated (84 %)	The risk tree management met the objectives.

	tat features for targeted species.			
C7 50 % of the nesting boxes put up	Supporting of existing populations of hermit beetle	83 mould boxes set up in Denmark and Germany	Currently 72 (87 %) mould boxes are established.	It is too early to evaluate for this activity in a useful way.
D1 Baseline report	Monitoring the impact of the project on the forest habitat types.	To successfully monitor target habitats and activities (C1-C7) in Denmark.	The baseline monitoring for targeted habitat types and species and the baseline report were carried out successfully.	The baseline monitoring report met the objectives.
D1 Basic monitoring for targeted habitat types and species completed	Monitoring the impact of the project on the forest habitat types			The basic monitoring met the objectives
D1 Formulation of quantitative goals for improvement of conservation status of the targeted habitats and species – a strategy	Ensuring successful implementation		The monitoring strategy has been carried out successfully.	The monitoring strategy met the objectives.
D3 Before project surveys and analysis completed	Reporting on the outputs and impact of the project taking into account the LIFE Key project level indicators. These indicators will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project.		The key project level indicators were chosen and filled into the KPI- database successfully.	The key project level indicators were chosen and filled into the KPI- database successfully.

E1 1st Private Owners Network meeting organized	Facilitating uptake of compensation schemes on biodiversity in forests and increase willingness to make agreements to secure core habitats for hermit beetle for the future editions of the N2000 action plans. Helping DEP preparing recommendations for improvement of existing compensation schemes to lower barriers in their uptake.		The first meeting took place the 16th of November 2020. The first study tour was held the 16th of June 2021 at the project site DK-21, focusing on the biology of the hermit beetle and the best practice catalogue.	The first meeting met the objectives: 10 participants. A framework for principles of the network was outlined
E1 1st of study tour organized				The second study tour met the objectives
E1 2nd of study tour organized			Stakeholder analysis	The second study tour met the objectives partly
E2 1st, 2nd and 3rd course held	Developing courses on forest management for biodiversity purposes to increase knowledge in the public and private sector, and to qualify future education programs on this topic.	Participation: 35-45 forest managers, 25-30 forest technicians, 35 machine operators and contractors.	The 3 courses were carried out as one big course. The objective of this was to obtain the synergies of having forest managers and forest workers together in the courses. Participants: Module 1 Forest managers: 62 Forest workers: 36. Module 2 Forest managers: 56 Forest workers: 36. Module 3 Forest managers: 66 Forest workers: 47. Module 4 Forest managers: 53 Forest workers:	The participation was successful, and more employees than expected participated in the course.

			32	
E4 1st workshop held	Facilitating exchange of experience, networking, involvement and ownership among the partners.	The workshop adresses veteranization and management for increasing structural diversity of habitats, management of grazed woodlands and hydrology and oak habitats. App. 25-30 persons will participate.	25 participants. The workshop adressed the themes hermit beetle population management and forest restoration	The workshop met the objectives
E4 50% networking activities held	Site visits, meetings, exchange of information, and/or other such networking activities with other relevant LIFE projects.			The networking activities met the objectives.
E5 Video material	Disseminating the project targeted at the general public.	No expected results on the video material as this is not in the grant agreement, but is afterwards agreed upon.	14 videos were produced and published in the period 2020 to 2022.	Within the period of February 2020 – July 2025 the videos have been viewed 43,800 times in total. The most exposed video had almost 10,000 views. Besides enabling digital dissemination the video material supports the networking ac-

				tivities.
E5 Leaflets in English, Danish and German		The leaflet will outline the project partners, sites, aims and actions. The leaflet will be printed in Danish/ English and German (in total 4.000 copies). All leaflets will be available as pdf files to be downloaded from the project website.	The leaflets were designed and printed in Danish in April 2022, in English in December 2022 and in German in October 2023.	The leaflets met the objectives.
E5 Roll ups and beach flags		(3 psc. DNA, 2 SNSH) and 12 'LIFE beachflags' (DNA, SH) will be produced for the project to promote the project on information meetings, workshops and conferences.	Beach flags and roll ups were produced in April 2021.	The roll ups and beach flags met the objectives.
E5 Nature dissemination product		No expected results on the nature dissemination event as this is not in the grant agreement, but is afterwards agreed upon.	An event was designed, and physical product can support up to 100 visitors during one workday. Furthermore, a launch event was conducted where 52 participated.	The dissemination event met the objectives.

E5 External communications consultant		No expected results on this as this is not foreseen in the grant agreement.		The communications consultant met the objectives.
F1 Steering group organized	The SG will be responsible for: Strategic decisions concerning project implementation and resources, and overall control of the progress and approval of major changes and corrective actions in the project.	Steering group meetings follow the schedule for reporting.	The steering committee meets annually and have met six times (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025).	The formation of the steering group met the objectives.
F1 Project manager assigned and project manager group set up	Assuring that the work on sites are well coordinated and running according to the objectives and time plan. An important part of the group's work is to learn from each other and exchange experiences and ideas, thus experience of one local manager can be fast implemented by others.	PMG will meet once a year or when necessary.	The PMG meets whenever necessary and so far, four meetings have been conducted. The PMG group meets biannually - one time physically and one time online. Furthermore on mission meetings and networking activities.	The project manager and project management group met the objectives.

6.3.3 Visibility of results and 6.3.4 Effectiveness of dissemination

Some of the achieved results so far have immediate visibility. Here the results with immediate visibility are listed in a prioritized order from most efficient visibility to least.

E5 Dissemination videos

Within the period of February 2020 – July 2025 the videos have each been viewed on average 3,142 times. The two most exposed videos had more than 9,800 views each. Furthermore, the videos have been used by the partners in related contexts, for example by DNA to disseminate knowledge on forest systems in the context of public meetings related to the Nature National Parks and the new untouched forest sites.

E2 Education program

The education program has been presented on network activities and conferences such as the LIFE platform meeting 2022, and were presented on the Danish Nature Management conference 2023 at FLC.

C3 European bison in DK-19
The European bisons have been visited many times by professionals and by the public on guided tours. The visitors' center at Lille Vildmose also contains dissemination information on the European bisons and has approximately 150.000 annual visitors. Furthermore, it has been disseminated on the social media by the AVJF nature fund and by the Lille Vildmose visitors' center.

C7 The mould boxes in DK-21, DK-22, and DE-1
The mould boxes have been set up in three sites in Denmark and Germany as planned and are visible for the general public. Information signs have been set up on the boxes in Denmark and in Germany.

E5 The dissemination products by Copenhagen ZOO
Copenhagen ZOO are continuously disseminating the project at the annual 'People's Festival of Nature', and in the exhibition in the zoo and in the school program which takes place in the holidays (Easter, summer and autumn).

E4 Networking and workshops
The project has been represented on various networking activities, see chapter 6.1 pages 42 for further details.

A1 Best practice methods catalogue
The best practice methods catalogue has been distributed to project partners and when external relations have asked for it (such as actors in the Danish municipalities and private sector). Furthermore, it is available as a PDF online.

E5 The dissemination leaflets and roll ups
The leaflets and the roll ups have been brought to the different networking arrangements the project have participated in so far.

E5 Presence on social media
The project hase been present on LinkedIN since July 2023. Currently the page has 631 followers.

6.3.5 Policy impact
LIFE Open Woods has provided best practice on a new field within Danish forest management. This have supported and eased the DNAs ongoing implementation processes of the political decisions on the projects NNPs and Untouched Forests formerly described in page 10. The LIFE Open Woods project application was in the making in 2015 with expectations of project start in 2016. The application was however postponed, and thus the project started in 2019. Back then, the project was representing some new thoughts in the Danish forest management. During the years from 2020 and until now, there have been an increasing focus, interest and awareness on the topic of biodiversity in forests both politically and in the general public. LIFE Open Woods supports this development by providing best practice knowledge. The competence course was the first university level course made in Denmark specifically targeting practical actions and means for forest management for biodiversity. From 2023 replications and similar courses were conducted in Denmark by for instance DNA and the Danish Forest association.[24] The policy implementations of NNPs and untouched forest have affected this project as well. To some extend the project context has changed due to these. The project context has become more complex in the matter of project locations and the legal work of applying for permissions. On the other hand, the implementations of NNPs and untouched forest have increased the awareness of forest management for biodiversity purposes within the DNA institution, and in the general public, which all in all is considered positive for the project. In conclusion the project has had a positive effect on the Danish nature policy, and the coinciding projects of LIFE Open Woods, NNP and un-

touched forest is all in all positive despite some logistically complications regarding project sites and applying for permissions.

6.4Analysis of benefits

6.4.1 Environmental benefits

All the C1-C7 activities implemented until now and in the future are within targeted Natura 2000 areas. In that way the activities are contributing to improvements in conservation status of the natural habitat types and the species, although this may not yet be measureable. It has been discussed with the DNA employee responsible for the projects monitoring program, and thus far it is too soon to appoint certain trends. We expect that the status forest habitat types are improving and that the forest structures are improving due to the activities already implemented.

6.4.2 Economic benefits

The competence courses developed in corporation with the Forest and Landscape College create a basis for a market of biodiversity forest management that is currently expanding in Denmark. There is a growing demand for knowledge and tools for managing forests for biodiversity purposes. The demand has rapidly grown in the public sector. Especially with the political environment the most recent years where more areas have been set aside for biodiversity purposes[25]. The demand for competences within forest management for biodiversity is also present in the private sector, and is growing. For instance, a competence course, much similar to the LIFE Open Woods course, has been developed by the Danish association of private forests and were conducted in Denmark in May and June 2023. Furthermore, the same actor arranged a meeting on debating biodiversity as a new business mean. Other actors in the private sector are developing tools specifically made for veteranization. Danish municipalities are asking for courses in forest management for biodiversity purposes, and have directly contacted the LIFE Open Woods project management several times. The project management is following this trend thoroughly in media and by participating in relevant meetings. The private entrepreneurs with skills within forest management for biodiversity purposes are in demand, and are expanding their businesses. The forest and Landscape College has had a summer course for the students on forest management for biodiversity and the last two years the school took twice as many students at the course than expected. The Forest and Landscape College has therefore decided to upgrade the summer course to an obligatory course in the forest management bachelor program.

6.4.3 Social benefits

Training of forest personnel in changing the work assignments within forestry from traditional timber production towards conservation actions for enhancing forest biodiversity provides a social benefit, as employees participating in the training will be more robust in a field were the work tasks are changing. In 2022, the DNA management committee published and promoted a new vision for the DNA with a main focus on biodiversity and recreation. The LIFE Open Woods competence course is a facilitator of a successful implementation of the vision by training the employees in new work tasks within management for biodiversity.

Furthermore, dissemination initiatives will be taken to improve public knowledge, awareness and positive connotation of biodiversity and ‘wild’ nature. This will also promote the Natura 2000 network in general.

6.4.4 Replicability, transferability, cooperation

The project products are developed with replicability and transferability in mind. The competence course is replicable, the best practice catalogue mediates replication, and the work with editing the best practice catalogue by the project participants mediates replication in similar projects. The following project products mediate direct replication and transferability:

- The best practice methods catalogue
- The competence course
- The strategy for monitoring the quantitative goals for improvement of conservation status

- The dissemination activities

Given the material produced in the project, and planned to be further developed as the project comes along the replicability and transferability of the project are estimated as high. Based on the interest in the project nationally and internationally the likelihood of replication is also high. In 2022, a focus on revisiting the best practice methods began by facilitating internal project workshops. Hereby, the cooperation within the project will be strengthened in the future. There will be a future focus on following the demand in the private sector, and potentially disseminate the project knowledge and best practice further. From 2023, the DNA has been doing a replicate course inspired by the LIFE Open Woods competence course. In 2023, the Danish Forest Association has made a similar two-day course, with the same themes and some of the same academic professors teaching. Furthermore, the knowledge and experiences collected in the project is directly used in DNAs projects with the NNPs and untouched forest. For instance, the DNA have defined, that their network focused on forest management should incorporate the knowledge of LIFE Open Woods and act as a standard bearer when the project period has ended. The likelihood of replication is high, as it is already being done both in the public and private sector.

6.4.5 Best Practice lessons

The methods used in the concrete conservation actions are in general implemented as expected. Some methodological development has been made. In C1 – veteranization – there has been experiments with different methods being more and less cost efficient economically and in regard to habitat improvement. Furthermore, there has been some discussion on the possibilities on using prescribed burning in forest management for biodiversity. However, so far, it hasn't been possible to try out prescribed burning in the project. In C5 – enrichment plantings – there has been developed different planting methods. In the remaining project period there will be developed a veteranization method targeting the hermit beetle. For the dissemination activities there has also been some innovation. An escape room inspired nature dissemination event has been made to target the public that would not visit the nature just for nature's sake, but needs another reason. The event was launched and the target group was met successfully.

6.4.6 Innovation and demonstration value

So far, the actions C1, C2, C3, C5, C6, and C7 have been implemented in project sites to a level of demonstration character. The project is testing and implementing a new way of managing forests and thereby the project has a high level of innovation. Furthermore, developing the competence course and the following demand communicated to the project management, and some experiments within the monitoring program on transplanting the lichen Tree lungwort (*Lobaria pulmonaria)* show the high level of innovation within the project. A cooperation with Copenhagen ZOO has been established on disseminating the management activities on conserving the hermit beetle. Copenhagen ZOO have skills within conserving populations of the saproxylic beetle the noble chafer (*Gnorimus nobilis)*. As the hermit beetle and the noble chafer are both scarab beetles, this cooperation could lead to future synergies on the conservation of the hermit beetle. Furthermore, the nature dissemination event is innovative and has a demonstration value as a facilitation manual is included in the product for easy replication and demonstration.

6.4.7 Policy implications

The competence course and the first edition of the best practice methods catalogue have supported the DNA in the work of planning and implementing the politically decided 15 Nature National Parks and in total 75.000 ha of untouched forest. The management of especially LIFE Open Woods and untouched forest are using similar methods and activities. There is also an overlap of methods and activities between LIFE Open Woods and Nature National Parks. The political decisions on Nature National Parks and untouched forest is elaborated in chapter 5 page 10.

7 LIFE project-level indicators

The LIFE Project-level Indicator (LPI) targets have been included into the LPI database webtool at the early stage of the project. Currently there are no additions or changes to this. The LPI will be updated at the final

report stage.

8 Comments on the financial report

8.1 Summary of Costs Incurred

The table below shows the project's aggregated consumption distributed by cost categories. The consumption within each cost category aligns well with the overall progress of the project. Regarding the cost category Personnel, the aggregated budget consumption is 65 %, which is considered appropriate in relation to the reporting period, which covers approximately 70 % of the total project period.

Regarding the cost category travel, consumption has been significantly lower than expected, in relation to the stage of the project. The main reason for this has been the COVID-19 shutdown from March 2020 to February 2022, where the opportunities to gather in larger groups for workshops, networking etc. have been extremely limited. We expect that consumption in the remaining part of the project period will increase significantly compared to our consumption so far.

Regarding the cost category External assistance, consumption is lower than expected in relation to the reporting period. This is mainly related to the delay in implementation of activities in action C4. Other major costs area budgetted in the remaining part of the project period i.e. final monitoring so we expect the consumption to increase significantly compared to the status so far.

In cost category 4b, Equipment sub-tot. consumption has been significantly lower than expected. This is mainly due to the budget for purchase of European bison to DK-19 being redundant due to the animals being donated free of cost.

In cost category 5, Land purchase/lease/ one-off comp. there has been an unbudgeted expenditure of approximately 50,000 Euro. This effort was accepted by CINEA in a letter Ref. Ares(2022)4034514 - 31/05/2022, Issue 20.

Overall, our expenditure is slightly lower than expected in relation to the project's current stage. Major activities are pending regulatory approval, so the expectation is that our future spending will align well with the overall budget.

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED				
Cost category		Budget according to the grant agreement in €*	Costs incurred within the reporting period in €	%**
1.	Personnel	2.203.634	1.422.134	65%
2.	Travel and subsistence	189.012	50.721	27%
3.	External assistance	2.974.567	1.189.739	40%
4.	Durables goods: total non-depreciated cost	-		-
a.	*- Infrastructure sub- tot.*	-		-
b.	*- Equipment sub-tot.*	167.579	27.492	16%
c.	*- Prototype sub-tot.*			

5.	Land purchase/lease/ one-off comp.		49.905	
6.	Consumables	603.037	327.444	54%
7.	Other costs	129.193	83.416	65%
8.	Overheads	438.688	217.063	49%
TOTAL		**6.705.710**	**3.367.914**	50%

8.2 Accounting system

DNA, DEP and SGAV

The Agencies make use of – more or less – the same coherent accountancy. All internal appropriations, budgets and accounts are kept in one system. This system also holds information about each employee's time registration. This means that all financial reporting materials are stored in one system, with easy access to extract the information again.

Amphi, AVJF, FLC and SN

These partners are using different accountancy. All systems work though more or less the same way and are based on the same principles. All project relevant information is combined in one system and is easily extracted to be used in the financial reporting.

Project account

DNA, DEP and SGAV

Each LIFE-Nature project has one or more accounts, depending on the complexity of the project, to hold the financial information. Each local unit in the Agencies participating in a LIFE-Nature project has a specific account-number to hold internal appropriations, budgets and accounts, relevant for the actions this local unit is involved in. The local unit participating in a LIFE-Nature-project will get an internal appropriation in the beginning of the project, based on a budget regarding the actions the local unit must complete. These project accounts are balanced each year.

Partner	Account no:	Account Text
DNA:	640700	LIFE-OpenWoods - Forbrug NST:
DEP:	222603	TFA/LIF/ LIFE Nat/DK/000747 - LIFE Open Woods
SGAV:	230802	TFA/LIFE Open Woods

Amphi, AVJF, FLC and SN

Each partner has set up an account-number system reflecting the actions the partner are involved in. The accounts are typical build in a hierarchical way and the basis numbers are unique for the LIFE-project, which is also reflected in the account text.

Partner	Account no:	Account Text
Amphi	747	OpenWoods LIFE 18 NAT/DK/000747
AVJF.:	21190	LIFE Openwoods
FLC	118541-50507200	LIFE Open Woods
SN:	T20035	LIFE Open Woods

All partners

The following practice applies to all partners. All invoices undergo a control procedure before they are sent for accounting registration. When the invoice is received in the digital invoice handling system, the person who ordered the commodity accepts the invoice, and verifies that the invoice complies with the specification of the contract, including a clear reference to the LIFE-project. If something is missing, the requestor

rejects the invoice, which is then returned to the supplier for modification.

After the requestor has accepted the invoice and made some initial registrations, the invoice is forwarded to an accountant for additional registrations. Finally, payment of the invoice is approved by the head of office or someone authorized to do so.

That means that all invoices are approved by a minimum of two authorized persons.

DNA, DEP and SGAV

All officials make time registration into an electronic system on a daily basis. All project relevant activities are marked with project and action specific numbers. Each month the employee accepts and locks the time registration, after which the registration is approved by the head of the Unit.

Forest workers complete their time registration also on a daily basis, typically on a sheet of paper, or into an Excell-sheet covering one month. As is the case for the officials, the forest worker also marks their time registrations with project relevant ID's and action specific numbers. The employee and the personnel manager sign the timesheets immediately after the end of the month. The manual registrations are subsequently entered into the same electronic time registration system that the officials use. From January 1st 2025 forest workers have adapted the same electronic system that the officials use.

All time registration, both for the officials and for the forest workers is then accessible in the accountancy.

Statistical information based on the employee's information in the timesheet database is composed every year. The "yearly-statistic" is the foundation when calculating the annual working time. The annual working time is calculated on an individual basis for every employee.

The total time registered is then reduced with the non-productive time.

Amphi and SN

These partners use the standard time registration sheet, supplied by EASME. The Excell-sheet is modified to better serve the needs of the project. The time-registration is made on a daily basis, completed and signed by the employee and personnel manager within a period of 10 days after the end of the registration-period.

The annual working time is calculated on basis of the Excell time-registration sheets. I order to do so, the employee must prepare Excell time-registration sheets for all months, January to December, also for months the person has not been working on LIFE-Openwoods. The annual working time is calculated on an individual basis for every employee.

AVJF and FLC

Project staff from these two partners have a limited number of working hours (less than 15 hours in average per month) on the LIFE-Openwoods project. Project staff make an extensive/reduced time registration. They just record time spent on the project, assigned to a specific project action, on a monthly base. This is carried out so that the project management team can continuously monitor the action-wise consumption, including the consumption for personnel costs.

The annual working time for these employees will be the standard 1.720 hours per year.

All partners

Calculation of the annual gross salary is based on the actual cost for each individual employee. The monthly salary slip for the employee is used as a clear reference to the different elements included in the salary. The salary slip specifies which wage-components the salary is composed of.

Included in the Financial Reports (Excell-file) you will find a sheet, detailing the calculation of the annual

gross salary (***BruttoLon***).

The majority of the annual salary consists of regular wage, including different merit awards etc. In the Financial Report (***BruttoLon***) this element is mentioned as "SumEgentligLoen" (salary).

Some wage-elements included in the accumulated annual salary for some employees, are considered not eligible, and are therefore again deducted from the total salary, these include:

- Bonuses
- "Taxation-Technical"-benefits – Company payed benefits, which the employee must pay tax on i.e. telephone, company paid car
- Allowance to maintain an office at home

These wage-elements are listed in the Financial Report as "SumFradrag" (deduction).

Included in the annual gross salary is "wage earners' supplementary pension" (ATP). The employee pays 1/3 of this, which is included in the salary, and the employer pays 2/3. The employer contribution element is included as "SumStatsATP".

Also included in the annual gross salary is pension ("SumPension").

The social charges schemes are obligatory/compulsory for all employees except some trainees/apprentices. The schemes consist of the different components in the column 'AUBmm' and the column 'FLEX og Barsel':

- Aub (Arbejdsgiverens Uddannelsesbidrag): A financial support scheme mainly for trainees
- Aes (Arbejdsmarkets Erhvervssygsomssikring): A labour market fund for occupational diseases.
- Fleksbidrag: A financial support scheme, for getting unemployed persons back on the labour market.
- Barselsfonden: A financial support scheme so employers can receive reimbursement for part of the salary of employees who are on parental leave.

It is compulsory to take part in/pay to these support-schemes. But not all partners have chosen to claim social charges, consequently these cost are ***not*** included in the annual gross salary.

Relationship between the two sheets ***Personnel_EMPLOYEES*** and ***BruttoLon***

In the sheet ***Personnel_EMPLOYEES*** the following columns appear, all amounts in these cells are imported from the ***BruttoLon***-sheet

- The column 'E1 – Annual gross salary' corresponds to *Bruttoløn (Løn + Pension)*
- The column 'E2 – Annual obligatory social charges' corresponds to *Social Charges*.
- The column 'E3 – Justification on other eligible statutory' – is not relevant for any partner in this project.

8.3 Partnership arrangements

Financial transactions between the coordinating beneficiary and the associated beneficiaries are specified in the partnership agreement. The payment scheme between the coordinating beneficiary and the associated beneficiary is based on the actual realised spending by the associated beneficiary. The payment is made once a year per April 1st the following year, after approval of the annual financial report by the Financial Manager. The pre-financing payment for:

- 2019/2020 was made in 2021

- 2021 was made in 2022
- Etc.

The coordinating beneficiary has established a common data sharing platform called "Filkassen". Each partner uploads updated Financial Reports and supporting documents every quarter. During the month following the upload, the Financial manager makes a quality assurance of the financial reports and the supporting documentation.

Based on these quarterly updated and uploaded financial reports, the financial manager prepares a consolidated financial report and cost statement for the project management group and the steering committee.

8.4 Certificate on the financial statement

According to ***2018_annex_x_financial_administrative_guidelines*** the following thresholds are applicable for Life-Openwoods, with respect to which beneficiary must deliver a certificate on the financial statements and accounts.

For each beneficiary and for each affiliated entity, if:

(i) the cumulative amount of payments the beneficiary requests as reimbursement of actual costs is EUR 325 000 or more;
(ii) the maximum grant amount indicated for that beneficiary and its affiliated entities in the estimated budget as reimbursement of actual costs is EUR 750 000 or more.

In the table below, budget for total costs, EU-contribution and own contribution is listed for each beneficiary.

Beneficiary short name	Total costs of actions in € (including overheads)	Amount of EU contribution requested in €	Beneficiary's own contribution in €	Audit Report
DNA	***4.045.055***	***2.318.070***	1.726.985	***YES***
AVJF	***1.284.902***	***613.761***	671.141	***YES***
DEP	262.698	250.614	12.084	***NO***
SGAV	315.772	301.011	14.761	***NO***
SN	504.179	302.508	201.671	***NO***
AMPHI	209.057	187.034	22.023	***NO***
FLC	84.047	50.428	33.619	***NO***
In Total	6.705.710	4.023.426	2.682.284	

DNA and AVJF have all requested EU-contribution above the threshold value of 325.000 EURO. In addition, DNA and AVJF have estimated budget of total cost well above the threshold value of 750.000 EURO. DNA, and AVJF will deliver audit reports. These will be completed after the end of the project and submitted together with the final report, to certify that all costs incurred respect national legislation and accounting rules as well as the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Certificates on the financial statements are not relevant for LIFE18 NAT/DK/000747 - Open Woods at interim stage.

8.5 Estimation of person-days used per action

The table below shows how the time registration of the staff is distributed to the overall action types. In general, there is good alignment between the consumption of person days spent, 63 %, and the corresponding realized personal cost, 65 %, cf. the table first in this section.

Action type	Budgeted person-days	Spent person-days	% of person-days spent
All projects when applicable Action A: Preparatory actions	510	375	74 %
NAT and CLIMA projects Action B: Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for payment rights	0	0	0 %
NAT projects Action C – Concrete conservation actions	1.450	1.462	101 %
NAT and CLIMA projects Action D: Monitoring and impact assessment	506	102	20 %
NAT and CLIMA projects Action E: Communication and Dissemination of results	1.161	374	32 %
NAT and CLIMA projects Action F: Project management (and progress)	2.650	1.638	62 %
TOTAL	**6.277**	**3.951**	**63 %**

A-Action ***Prepatory actions*** reveal, quite naturally, a high relative consumption. Three quarters of the budgeted hours have been used so far. A number of initiatives are still pending. It is expected that these will be implemented without significant budgetary challenges.

B-Actions. ***Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for payment rights***. Not relevant for LIFE-Openwoods

C-Actions. The ***Concrete conservation actions*** are generally progressing well. A large part of the work related to *C.1 Creation of decaying wood habitats* and *C.2 Open woods increasing structural diversity and control of alien species* is being carried out by our own staff. In the budget, this work was partly allocated to external assistance. There are still several specific conservation actions pending, which are expected to be carried out by our own staff. The total expenditure in this category will therefore be somewhat higher than budgeted.

Action D: ***Monitoring and impact assessment***: Activities in relation to monitoring of impact on habitats and species and Life Project Level Indicators (LPI), are on track, whereas the work with Ecosystem services and socio-economic surveys is significantly delayed. This work has been especially addressed in the later part of this reporting period. The activity plan is expected to be implemented without significant adjustments.

Action E: ***Communication and Dissemination of results***: Activities have not been implemented as expected. The main deviances were change of the first study to webinars, which was less time consuming. The public guided tours were changed to another format, primarily developed by an external company, thus also

reducing expected personnel hours significantly. The remaining activity plan is expected to be implemented without significant delays or further adjustments.

Action F: ***Project management (and progress)***: The consumption of time for Project management fits well with the established budgets. The activity plan is expected to be implemented without significant adjustments.

Additional information on the financial reporting:

Recovering VAT:

AVJF and SN cannot recover VAT, which is reflected in the financial reporting for the two partners. The required VAT-statements will be included in the Final Report.

Financial issues:

- Issues raised in the letter of 31 May 2022 following the third monitoring visit:
  - Issue 3.
- Issues raised after the Midterm Report
  - Issue 4 – Issue 10

Please refer to annex 19: Financial Issues 3 – 10.

9 Envisaged progress until next report

Overall project schedule	Year	2019		2020				2021				2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028
	Quarter	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1
		Start date: 01-09-2029														Midterm I 31-03-2023								Midterm II 31-10-2025								End date: 31-12-2027				
A1 Adaptation of best practice	Proposed																		●																	
	Expected																		♦																	
A2 Application for permissions and implementation plans	Proposed														●																					
	Expected																																♦			
A3 Management agreements and applications for compensation schemes	Proposed														●																					
	Expected																								♦											
A4 Revision of management and action plans	Proposed																	●																		
	Expected																			♦																	
C1 Creation of decaying wood habitats	Proposed																											●								
	Expected																											♦								
C2 Open woods - increasing structural diversity and control of alien species	Proposed																												●							
	Expected																												♦							
C3 Establishment of grazing	Proposed																											●								
	Expected																												♦							
C4 Improvement of hydrological conditions	Proposed																												●							
	Expected																																♦			
C5 Increasing connectivity and promotion of oak rejuvenation	Proposed																								●											
	Expected																												♦							
C6 Tree management for public safety	Proposed																											●								
	Expected																											♦								
C7 Population management for hermit beetle	Proposed																							●												
	Expected																												♦							
D1 Monitoring of impact on habitats and species	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
D2 Ecosystem services and socio-economic surveys	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
D3 Key Project Level Indicators (KPI)	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
E1 Involvement of forest managers and private forest owners	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
E2 Competence development on forest management for habitats, species and biodiversity	Proposed																		●																	
	Expected												♦																								
E4 Capacity building for partners and networking with other LIFE and non LIFE projects	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
E5 Dissemination to public and info materials	Proposed																															●				
	Expected																															♦				
F1 Project management	Proposed																																			●
	Expected																																			♦
F2 Revision	Proposed																																			●
	Expected																																			♦
F3 After LIFE plan	Proposed																																			●
	Expected																																			♦

Appendices

See separate files in the zipped folder

1 Program Study Tour Sweden 28-08-2023 A1
2 Study tour participants Sweden 2023 A1
3 Report by participants Study tour Sweden_2023 A1
4 Implementation plan signed - DK-23 A3
5 Program and participants – prescribed burning workshop E4
6 Workshop Prescribed Burning Participants report E4
7 Opgavebeskrivelse Digital Best practice catalogue E1
8 FLC Addition partnership agreement D2 E1
9 Opgavebeskrivelse Nature dissemination event E5
10 CPH ZOO Aktivitetsark Osmoderma Eremitae E5
11 Key story for LIFE Open Woods E5
12 Personas and strategy E5
13 Program and Participants LIFE Open Woods Study Tour Slesvig-Holstein 29.-30. september 2025 E4
14 Model for buying trees from private landowners for veteranization and natural decay A3
15 Issues raised in letter LIFE18 NAT DK 000747 MTR1LET 230516 June 2023
16 Project objectives and results
17 Planting models C5
18 Index deliverables
19 Financial Issues 3-10