Improving consumer Protection Against Zoonotic diseases – Phase II

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Interim report no. 2
Volume I

16 July 2014 to 15 January 2015
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADI</td>
<td>Animal Disease Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>Animal Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIP</td>
<td>Veterinary (or Phytosanitary) Border Inspection Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVO</td>
<td>Chief Veterinary Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSVI/ISUV</td>
<td>Food Safety and Veterinary Institute/</td>
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<tr>
<td>FVO</td>
<td>Food and Veterinary Office of EC</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>I&amp;R</td>
<td>Animal Identification and Farm Registration (EU-compliant)</td>
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<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization (in Geneva)</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>LogFrame</td>
<td>Logical Framework (project planning methodology)</td>
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<td>MARDWA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Water Administration</td>
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<td>NVEU</td>
<td>National Veterinary Epidemiology Unit</td>
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<td>NFA</td>
<td>National Food Authority</td>
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<td>OIE</td>
<td>Office International des Epizooties</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORV</td>
<td>Oral rabies vaccination (or vaccine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCM</td>
<td>Project Cycle Management (Guidelines)</td>
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<td>PSC</td>
<td>Project Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUDA</td>
<td>Database for the registration of identified animals (I&amp;R system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SICCT</td>
<td>Single intradermal comparative cervical tuberculin (test)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPH</td>
<td>Veterinary Public Health (consumer health protection)</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Improving Consumer Protection Against Zoonotic Diseases – Phase II</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project location</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
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<tr>
<td>TA value</td>
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<td>Govt. contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total value</td>
<td>€ 2 497 500</td>
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**Key stakeholders**: The public in Albania; consumers of animal products, regulatory authorities, veterinary administration and services, livestock producers and traders in livestock and products of animal origin.

**Overall objective**: Contribute to increased livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.

**Project purpose**: The capacity to plan, implement, monitor and sustain risk-based national strategies for the progressive control and eradication of target zoonotic diseases\(^1\) is established.

**Key results**:

**Result 1**: A coherent, integrated and fully operational animal disease surveillance system is in place.

**Result 2**: Multi-annual, strategic programmes for the progressive control and eradication of priority animal diseases and major zoonoses are implemented effectively.

**Result 3**: Risk of human exposure to rabies from infected foxes in Albania progressively reduced and eliminated.

**Result 4**: A sustainable, modern national communication system is established between the state veterinary service and key stakeholder groups.

**Current project status**: Inception period

**Author of the report**: Robert Connor, Team Leader

**Including project component reports of**:

- **Toni Kirandjiski** Disease Surveillance Expert
- **Ieva Rodze** Laboratory Expert
- **Ylli Pema** Institutional & Administrative Support Expert
- **Raymond O’Rourke** Legislation Expert

\(^1\) Target diseases include brucellosis, anthrax, tuberculosis, CSF and rabies.
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project aims to “Contribute to increased livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania, in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.” In this reporting period, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration announced the intention to reform the veterinary service and national food authority. The project team contributed to a consultative process to reform the veterinary service, which was not completed by mid-January 2015. The project’s Veterinary Legislation expert and local Legal Expert worked with the beneficiary to review again the draft law on a Veterinary Order to establish an Albanian statutory body, as detailed in Article 113 of the Veterinary Law 2011. There continued to be difficulties in interpretation of the roles of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Food Authority in relation to competences and the enforcement of legislation in the veterinary field.

The important assumption made in the project’s logical framework that “In 2014, the Government defines lines of reporting between the institutions that have veterinary responsibilities as a basis for national surveillance network” was not valid, which detracted from the project’s impact. Thus, several activities were suspended until the context of the project improved. The resignation of the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) in December 2014 was a further major setback for the project.

In view of these conditions the project focused on activities to achieve expected results 2 and 3, where tangible progress was made. The epizootic of blue tongue virus (BTV) infections throughout the country was a major diversion for the veterinary service. Outbreaks commenced in May 2014 and by late October the crisis had subsided: several hundreds of animals (cattle and small ruminants) died. The project’s Disease Surveillance Expert (DSE) provided operational advice on the surveillance of the BTV outbreaks but no key experts were present in Albania between mid-August and 15 September when outbreaks peaked. This epizootic increased the usage of the RUDA-based disease reporting system and more than 4,281 reports were made during 2014, compared with 520 in 2013. Large numbers of specimens from animals suspected to have BTV infections were submitted from the field by means of the postal courier system that the PAZA Project had established. The Animal Health Department (AHD) of the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute (ISUV) completed laboratory analysis of 6,482 blood samples.

The number of specimens from suspected cases of anthrax received at the ISUV AHD increased significantly in 2014 compared with recent years. The PAZA Disease Surveillance Expert (DSE) reported on the anthrax situation in the country. Although epidemiological status of anthrax could not be determined reliably, available data for 2014 showed that the strategy proposed by the project had reduced vaccine usage; fewer animals in fewer villages had been vaccinated without an increase in the number of confirmed outbreaks. In 2013 and 2014, a total of 18 outbreaks of anthrax were confirmed: 13 of these occurred in 12 villages in four districts. This indicates that the magnitude of the problem is not uniformly distributed in the country. Seven out of 18 outbreaks (40%) occurred in villages with previous “history” of the disease. Although the quantity and quality of the specimens submitted to ISUV increased, traceability was not assured: labelling and ear tag numbers of the animals sampled were recorded for only 7 of the 52 samples submitted in 2014, meaning that traceability was not generally achieved. Further improvements in control measures in the field, i.e., disinfection, carcase disposal and documentation are required. The disease reporting system lacked performance monitoring and data were not collated in an easily retrievable manner to enable traceability.

The PAZA Laboratory Expert explained to counterparts the essential considerations of a laboratory information management system (LIMS). The director of ISUV indicated that there resources were
foreseen in ISUV’s annual budget (2015) for development of a LIMS. Animal identification underpins animal disease control programmes and the CVO had proposed the formation of a working group to focus on the national animal I&R system but the BTV epizootic prevented progress in reviewing the system.

The Laboratory Expert advised ISUV staff on the requirements of the biosecurity and biosafety procedures at the time of diagnosis of brucellosis and explained the application of methods for bacteriological and serological investigations of brucellosis and tuberculosis. She also made detailed recommendations on recording and the sample registration documentation.

The software developer of the RUDA system delivered bespoke training to six staff of the Animal Identification and Registration (I&R) Unit in the use of the system to which a LIMS should be linked. The project supported the National Rabies Coordinator to participate in a training workshop on rabies diagnostics in France. The Laboratory Expert identified the need for the AHD senior bacteriologist to receive training, and proposed that the PAZA II Project might purchase reagents to characterize the aetiological agent(s) of bovine brucellosis. Training on bovine tuberculosis diagnostic methods was also found to be necessary. Although bacteriological diagnosis of TB had been done at ISUV in the past, recent staff turnover meant that the existing laboratory personnel lacked sufficient technical skills and competence. It was recommended that specialized training should be organized at the tuberculosis laboratory of the Tuberculosis Dispensary in Tirana.

The diagnostic capacities for doing molecular tests for tuberculosis agents and genetic analyses could be established at ISUV sooner than those for conventional bacteriology. However, the lack of expertise and specific reagents were major obstacles to the realization of these molecular tests. Even if these obstacles were to be overcome, the persistent lack of abattoir surveillance would result in low levels of specimens arriving at the laboratory. Instead of promoting abattoir surveillance, the veterinary directorate’s strategy continued to be the large-scale tuberculin skin testing of cattle, for which large numbers of veterinarians were employed. The veterinary directorate reported that, in 2014, a total of 31,500 head of cattle were tested for tuberculosis: the prevalence of the disease in cattle was reported to be 0.08%. Data on the distribution of positive cases were not reported and no systematic submission of samples from slaughtered cattle occurred, meaning that the laboratory did not receive material with which to work. The DSE submitted a discussion document on the control of bovine tuberculosis to the CVO.

In conclusion, these conditions prevent laboratory staff from acquiring the necessary technical competence.

During this reporting period, the veterinary directorate launched a national survey of bovine brucellosis, however, the outcome of this work was not clear: test results were not sufficiently well collated for conclusions to be drawn on the epidemiological status of brucellosis in cattle. In total 25,884 bovines were sampled and the overall prevalence of brucellosis in cattle resulted 0.14%. The project had proposed to plan and support a closely monitored bovine brucellosis survey in 2015 but recognized that incomplete cattle identification would be an impediment.

In August 2014, a case of suspected rabies occurred in Ujmisht village, Kukes region. The fox was shot and its head was submitted to ISUV where rabies diagnostic tests were done. It was found to be positive. Two other suspected cases in the same area were negative. These results were confirmed by the EU rabies reference centre, ANSES in France: the positive fox was infected with rabies virus belonging to the same EE group as isolates from neighbouring countries.

The DSE supervised implementation of the second oral rabies vaccination (ORV) campaign, which began on began on 16 October 2014. The project team and National Rabies Coordinator liaised with the Albanian authorities, i.e., veterinary service, Institute of Public Health, Civil Aviation Authority, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry of Environment (regarding permits to shoot foxes).
A total of 560 000 baits were received for the campaign; samples sent for testing at an EU/EEA Official Control laboratory indicated that the batches of vaccine were of satisfactory quality. The project’s field-based monitor conducted daily checks on vaccine storage and monitored compliance with prescribed procedures. The distribution of baits was generally satisfactory but improvement is required to prevent the distribution of vaccine baits over lakes and urban areas.

By December, most of the essential materials for rabies diagnostics had been delivered to ISUV through an EU supply contract but the equipment was not commissioned before the end of the reporting period. Tests to monitor the efficacy of vaccination could therefore not be completed, which meant that results of the first two ORV campaigns were not available by mid-January 2015. The final report assessing the effectiveness of the ORV will be produced when laboratory results from the blood, teeth and brain specimens from foxes have been tested.

Monitoring reports on the 2014 brucellosis vaccination campaign and two ORV campaigns will be produced after the project team receives data on post-vaccination monitoring from the national coordinators for the two diseases.

The project sponsored an event convened by the National Federation of Hunters in Lushnje on 28 September 2015, World Rabies Day, and used regional television channels and a national television station to raise awareness about the ORV campaign. The project distributed 31 925 posters, 277 900 leaflets 7 210 factsheets. Materials were distributed by post to 2 000 schools. The website www.lufto-terbimit.al was updated and the project’s film on rabies was used by the regional television stations.

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) licensed hunters in 17 districts to shoot up to 211 foxes but only 86 were shot, i.e., 41% of the planned number. Various factors arose which impeded the work, which will be addressed in the following campaigns.

Overall, the project’s external environment continued to pose serious risks that jeopardize its potential success and unless the system is reformed, project implementation can only be partial. These concerns were presented to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) when it met in November 2014.

The two overarching factors continued to affect adversely the sustainability of the project’s contribution to the sector:

- first, the lack of detail regarding the reform of the state veterinary service to remedy its extreme fragmentation, and
- second, the chronic under-resourcing of the state veterinary service, both in terms of the extremely low numbers of staff at the central level (veterinary directorate), and the severe, chronic lack of resources to ensure the mobility of field staff.

In response to a request from the Ministry for additional support for the reform of the veterinary structure, in December 2014 the EU Delegation approved an addendum to the Consortium’s contract. The addendum would enable the project team to assist the restructuring of the veterinary service, support the corresponding revision of veterinary legislation, and fund the monitoring of the tenth oral rabies vaccination campaign in Autumn 2018. Consequently, the replanning of the project will be an early activity in the forthcoming semester, before the vaccination of replacement small ruminants against brucellosis and the Spring ORV campaign begin.
3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE TO DATE

3.1 Policy and programme context

3.1.1 Policy and programme context

The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MARDWA) continued to undergo institutional reform during this reporting period, with the restructuring of the state veterinary service being a focal activity for both the project and the Ministry. However, despite a considerable investment by the project in attempting to facilitate the process, little was achieved during this reporting period in terms of tangible outcomes (section 3.2.3) and the context of the project remained unsettled and institutionally unclear.

Despite the groundwork done during the first reporting period and the availability of the OIE report of June 2014 (Interim report no. 1, section 3.1.1), the project had no tangible impact on the reform of the veterinary service during the second half of 2014.

Again, the important assumption made in the project’s logical framework that “In 2014, the Government defines lines of reporting between the institutions that have veterinary responsibilities as a basis for national surveillance network” (Annex 1: Logical framework) was not valid, which considerably undermined the outcome of the project.

In response to a request from the Ministry for additional support for the reform of the veterinary structure, in December 2014 the EU Delegation approved an addendum to the Consortium’s contract. The addendum would enable the project team to assist the restructuring of the veterinary service, support the corresponding revision of veterinary legislation, and the completion of the tenth oral rabies vaccination campaign in Autumn 2018.

3.1.2 Linkage to other ongoing operations

Implementation of the EU-funded IPA 2009 “Consolidation of Food Safety System in Albania” project (€3.5 million) ceased on December 2014 and, as a consequence, the PAZA II Project had little opportunity for collaboration during that project’s closing phase.

However, the PAZA II Project did continue its liaison with the National Food Authority particularly regarding veterinary diagnostics but the absence of a strategy for diagnostic laboratories, limited the project’s scope to contribute to the improvement of the overall food safety system.

The project team held intermittent discussions with the team leader of the MARDWA IPA 2011 “Support to Agriculture and Rural Development, IPARD like” project (€20.75 million) implemented by GIZ. The need to maintain an up to date farm register and to ensure correct, full identification of livestock were recognized to be essential for the implementation of both projects but the implementation of the national system remained a responsibility of the Ministry.
3.2 Progress towards achieving objectives

3.2.1 Overall objective

The project aims to “Contribute to increased livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania, in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.” To maximize its contribution to this goal, the PAZA II Project team intensified its liaison with other actors and projects in the sector (section 3.1) but with little apparent impact.

3.2.2 Project purpose

The project’s purpose was to ensure that, by the end of the project, “The capacity to plan, implement, monitor and sustain risk-based national strategies for the progressive control and eradication of target zoonotic diseases\(^2\) is established.” However, the negligible progress in the reform of the veterinary service (explained above) was a major obstacle to the project’s progress during this reporting period.

3.2.3 Expected results

The project has four main components, namely:

1. Disease surveillance and monitoring;
2. Strategic disease control programmes;
3. Monitoring of oral rabies vaccination campaigns; and,
4. Establishing a modern veterinary communication system between the state veterinary service and the main stakeholder groups.

The four results that the PAZA II Project is expected to achieve are reviewed below; they are presented in the logical framework matrix (Annex 1) and explained fully the Consortium’s Technical Proposal.

**Result 1. A coherent, integrated and fully operational animal disease surveillance system is in place.**

The project’s role is to support a range of strategic activities following a progressive path from activities commenced and planned during the inception phase.

The project team focused on the delivery of support during discussions with implementation partners of the requirements for disease surveillance and, using the analysis of gaps and constraints that was completed during the first reporting period, the team attempted to clarify the SVS’ institutional status.

On 1 July 2014, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration convened a consultative meeting on the reorganization of the State Veterinary Service in Albania.

\(^2\) Target diseases include brucellosis, anthrax, tuberculosis, CSF and rabies.
In November 2014, the Minister announced the intention to amalgamate the veterinary service and national food safety system.

Despite having made apparently reasonable progress in the period to mid-December through a consultative process led by the Deputy Minister, did not materialize during this semester, and the series of ‘next steps’ necessary to reform the veterinary service could not be taken.

The resignation of the Chief Veterinary Officer in December 2014 created a very significant gap that resonated with the observation of the OIE report (2014) that

“Frequent VS leadership replacement and recent reforms have made the roles and continuity of mission/objectives difficult for all parties.”

In view of these conditions, and in line with the advice of the EU Project Manager, in the forthcoming planning period, the project will continue to support the restructuring of the veterinary service. However, only after the satisfactory outcome of this restructuring will the project be able to commence implementation of the activities foreseen in the technical proposal.

At the field level, veterinary staff were preoccupied with tracking the epidemic of blue tongue virus (BTV) infections throughout the country. Outbreaks commenced in May 2014 and by late October the crisis had subsided: several hundreds of animals (cattle and small ruminants) had died. The project’s Disease Surveillance Expert (DSE) provided operational advice on the surveillance of the BTV outbreaks (Annex 2) but no key experts were present in Albania between mid-August and 15 September when outbreaks peaked.

**Result 2. Multi-annual, strategic programmes for the progressive control and eradication of priority animal diseases and major zoonoses are implemented effectively.**

By the end of June 2014, the vaccination of replacement small ruminants against brucellosis had been largely completed (section 3.3.2, Interim report no. 1). In this reporting period, the project’s main disease control activity consisted of supervising and supporting the implementation of the second oral rabies vaccination (ORV) campaign (outlined below), which was completed in October (result 3 below).

The strategy for the control of anthrax was implemented by the regional veterinary service when animals in listed villages were vaccinated with locally produced anthrax vaccine. Results of diagnostic tests during the year (section 3.3.2) were not available in time to enable the project team to review the strategy during this reporting period. However, they indicated improvements in specimen submission to the laboratory at ISUV, quantitatively and qualitatively, although the issue of lack of traceability remained unresolved.

The field service’s necessary preoccupation with the BTV during the summer and autumn months meant that the project did not have the opportunity to implement the intended review of the control of livestock movement in Albania, which is fundamental to effective disease control.
**Result 3. Risk of human exposure to rabies from infected foxes in Albania progressively reduced and eliminated.**

Distribution of vaccine baits for the second ORV campaign was completed on 30 October 2014. As during the first campaign, the Disease Surveillance Expert (DSE) followed a detailed monitoring plan and with project personnel closely monitored the distribution of vaccine. Subsequently, the project team organized licensed hunters to shoot a sample of foxes in hunting areas in 16 districts during December, with the aim of providing material to determine the level of immunity against rabies in the fox population.

As in the first ORV campaign, the vaccine baits were successfully distributed, although some recommendations were made to improve subsequent campaigns.

The project’s Laboratory Expert reviewed diagnostic tests with the staff of the Animal Health Department of ISUV and, in August/September, initial tests were conducted on brain samples from 51 foxes shot during the monitoring operation for the Spring campaign. Further tests were not done since specialist equipment was not delivered during this reporting period: it was to be supplied through the EU supply contract, which was awarded in July 2014.

The Communication Expert was not mobilized during this period and the local experts rolled out the project’s awareness raising strategy to support the ORV campaign.

**Result 4. A sustainable, modern national communication system is established between the state veterinary service and key stakeholder groups.**

The achievement of this expected result would fill a major gap in the state veterinary service’s operational approach. The project’s activities in the context of this result were again geared mainly towards supporting project activities: attempts during this reporting period to engage the veterinary service in discussion of improved communication with stakeholders were thwarted by the distraction created by the BTV epidemic, and the incomplete reform of the veterinary service. Consequently, negligible progress was made in the achievement of this result.

### 3.3 Activities undertaken to achieve expected results

The project team discussed the project’s work plan of activities during consultative meetings with the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), who was also the National Project Coordinator, and senior veterinary staff.

The following sections outline progress made in the implementation of the main activities that were included in the project’s logical framework (Annex 1).
3.3.1 Result 1 - A coherent, integrated and fully operational animal disease surveillance system is in place.

The project team maintained a dialogue with the CVO (National Project Coordinator) during late summer and autumn on the blue tongue virus (BTV) epidemic but, since this was not one of the project’s target diseases, the project was not actively engaged in its surveillance.

In November, the Minister announced publically the Government’s intention to merge the food safety system and the veterinary service. The Consortium mobilized legal experts to review the legislative implications of institutional reform. In November and December, the project became heavily involved in discussions concerning the restructuring of the veterinary service on which there were strongly divergent views.

At the end of the reporting period (mid-January 2015), the process of planning the reform was incomplete and working groups had apparently become fragmented, especially after the resignation of the CVO.

3.3.1.1 Review, in close cooperation with the Animal Health Sector in the Ministry of Agriculture, the list of the priority animal diseases subject to surveillance in Albania.

The outbreak of BTV precluded the possibility of the project engaging in the necessary discussions on this subject. The epidemic of BTV in August occurred when the project’s key experts were not present in Albania, and the staff of the veterinary service were fully engaged in reacting to events that affected thousands of cattle and small ruminants countrywide.

Once again, the review of priority diseases did not take place during this reporting period.

3.3.1.2 Develop a framework of implementing legislation under the Law on the Veterinary Service.

Albania needs to continue to transpose large sections of Chapter 12 of the *acquis communautaire* in the veterinary field, as highlighted in the EU Progress Report 2013 [SWD (2013) 141]. In July, the Minister announced the Government’s intention to reform the veterinary service and the project’s Veterinary Legislation expert was mobilized: he visited Tirana in July/August to review the progress made by the Albanian authorities in drafting veterinary legislation. He worked with the beneficiary in conjunction with the project’s local Legal Expert (Annex 3).

The draft law on a Veterinary Order for the establishment of an Albanian statutory body as detailed in Article 113 of the Veterinary Law 2011 had not been completed: the PAZA Project had submitted it to the Ministry in January 2013 but comments made by an OIE expert, who had visited Albania in June 2014, had prompted further review of the draft. Various orders had been adopted in conjunction with the Veterinary Law 2011 on the format and use of veterinary certificates. In addition, an amendment to the Veterinary Law in 2013, made changes to Articles 4, 82, 134 & 136 with regard to inspection tasks and penalties (Annex 4).
There continued to be difficulties in interpretation of the roles of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Food Authority in relation to competences and the enforcement of legislation in the veterinary field.

At a press conference in the Tirana International Hotel on Wednesday 5th November, the Prime Minister, Mr. Edi Rama, and the Minister of Agriculture, Prof. Dr. Edmond Panariti, launched an Agriculture Package: both highlighted the need for work to commence on the reform of the Albanian Veterinary Service.

The need for reform was also highlighted in the EU’s Albania 2014 Progress Report SWD (2014) 304 published on 8th October 2014. The Report noted “Constraints persist as a result of the fragmentation of the veterinary service, unclear responsibilities and procedures, staff shortages at central level, scarce budgetary resources and low mobility of field veterinarians.”

In November/December, the Legislation Expert assisted the facilitation of discussions in the Ministry regarding the legislative requirements to support an integrated national food safety and veterinary system (Annex 4). The Legislation Expert presented options for reform of the food safety and veterinary systems to the Project Steering Committee at its meeting on 13th November, and subsequently, participated in a consultative forum convened by the Deputy Minister of ARDWA to support a functional analysis of food safety agencies. The direction given by the EU Communication on Consumer Health & Food Safety (1997) on the nature of a Food & Veterinary Administration established two important principles that should underpin any national food safety and veterinary public health control system, namely:

- Responsibility for legislation should be separate from that for scientific consultation
- Responsibility for legislation should be separate from that for inspection

These principles were emphasized since they have important implications for the risk assessment functions of any National Food and Veterinary Administration that the Government of Albania might establish.

By mid-December, significant progress had been made in reaching a consensus between representatives of the Ministry, the National Food Authority, the ISUV and the State Veterinary Service on the allocation of roles and responsibilities at a broad institutional level, and a follow-up residential consultative/planning meeting was agreed upon for January/February 2015. However, in the weeks, subsequent to the resignation of the CVO, a series of separate discussions ensued (in which the project experts were not present), which reportedly led to alternative proposals for the structure of a national food safety and veterinary system.

By the end of the reporting period, the protracted and detailed discussions on restructuring the veterinary service had produced no final output. The institutional context of the project thus continued to be unsettled and uncertain.
3.3.1.3 Establish functional tools enabling disease notification information and epidemiological data to flow through a national surveillance network.

It was previously reported that the prime prerequisite for the implementation of this activity is the existence of a national surveillance network, which was not functional during the project’s inception phase. Independent of the project’s activities, the BTV epidemic activated the hitherto largely dormant system and a series of weekly reports were produced by the epidemiology unit of the ISUV. This was made possible by (a) the reports received through the national veterinary information system (RUDA), and (b) the laboratory analysis of large numbers of blood samples received at the Animal Health Department of ISUV: specimens were submitted from the field by means of the postal courier system that the PAZA Project had established.

Despite this encouraging level of activity, the system lacked performance monitoring and data were not collated in an easily retrievable manner to enable traceability.

In her third mission to Tirana, the project’s Laboratory Expert explained to counterparts the essential considerations of a laboratory information management system (LIMS). She gave a presentation on the scope of a LIMS and its minimum requirements to ISUV laboratory personnel and other interested parties, and advised on the suitability of the existing LabIS for veterinary LIMS purposes (Annex 5). This report, together with the preliminary consideration for development of LIMS produced by DSE (Annex 5.9 of Interim report no.1) could serve as a good baseline for the development of LIMS. The director of ISUV indicated that there are resources foreseen in ISUV’s annual budget (2015) for development of LIMS. The project could provide further support when it is decided to start with this activity.

3.3.1.4 Support the establishment of an effective and credible laboratory service in line with OIE (ISO 17025) standards.

During her third mission to Albania in November, the Laboratory Expert consulted ISUV staff on the application of methods for bacteriological and serological investigations of brucellosis and tuberculosis, and gave recommendations on the creation of the testing work records and the sample registration documents. The requirements on the biosecurity procedures at the time of diagnosis of brucellosis were also elaborated.

The Laboratory Expert also provided guidance to the personnel of the Animal Health Department (AHD) and Director of ISUV on the development of laboratory surveillance programmes cost planning and performance reporting (Annex 5).

In order to decide on the future actions for the creation of LIMS, the active participation of the administration department of ISUV is required.

Bacteriological investigations of suspicious brucellosis cases were done in the past, however, during the implementation of the PAZA Project there was neither current experience in the laboratory nor the full range of specific materials to identify the species and biovars of *Brucella* isolates. To address these shortcomings, the Laboratory Expert discussed discrepancies in the testing process with laboratory personnel responsible for
brucellosis testing, and transferred to them numerous internationally recognized methods and protocols for them to use.

3.3.1.5 **Complete training needs assessments for each element of the surveillance network and establish a progressive, sustainable training programme.**

Without a defined surveillance network – as explained above – implementation of this activity could not be addressed in a systematic manner.

The project received a request to assist the Animal Identification and Registration (I&R) Unit staff by supporting refresher training in the use of the RUDA system. During 2014, the performance of the RUDA system deteriorated for various reasons, one of which was the lack of refresher training, another being the lack of formal induction training for new staff.

The software developer of the RUDA system (ARK IT), based in Tirana, delivered bespoke training to the six staff identified. The training course lasted for four days and the project met the incidental costs of this training.

The project supported the head of ISUV’s Animal Health Department, who is also the National Rabies Coordinator, to participate in a training workshop on rabies diagnostics in France. It is proposed to introduce the new, simpler, filter paper blood collection method to monitor the oral rabies vaccination programme.

In order to increase the competence of bacteriology experts in ISUV, the Laboratory Expert identified the need to provide training for the senior bacteriologist at the National Reference Laboratory of Macedonia. The Laboratory Expert stated that financial support of the PAZA II Project would probably also be necessary for the purchase of reagents to enable the characterization of brucellosis agents.

Training on bovine tuberculosis laboratory diagnostic methods was also found to be necessary. The Laboratory Expert stated that in order to determine the incidence of bovine tuberculosis, within the frame of the PAZA II Project, tuberculosis bacteriological investigation methods would be required. Although bacteriological diagnosis of TB was done in the past, due to staff turnover in recent years, the present laboratory personnel lack sufficient technical skills and competence. The PAZA Laboratory Expert agreed with the laboratory experts from the Bacteriology Sector (AHD) on the need for them to gain practical skills and optimize the testing method’s SOP. They agreed to ask for the advice to the former (retired) expert of ISUV who has experience, Dr Eglantina Panduku, for advice and to seek training for ISUV staff at the specialized tuberculosis laboratory of the Tuberculosis Dispensary in Tirana. **It was recommended that** specialized training should be organized as soon as possible with the support of the director of ISUV.

The diagnostic capacities for doing molecular tests for tuberculosis agents and genetic analyses could be implemented earlier than conventional bacteriology. However, the lack of expertise and specific reagents were major obstacles to the realization of these molecular tests.
From a practical point of view, bacteriological investigations of pathological samples submitted from abattoir surveillance could be performed on samples submitted. Here, the problem remained the lack of specimens because of there was no systematic abattoir surveillance. Instead, the veterinary directorate supported the large scale tuberculin skin testing of cattle (Annexes 6 and 6a), for which large numbers of veterinarians were employed. The project team advised the CVO against the continuation of this approach, which would mean that trained laboratory staff would continue to lack materials to test. That, in turn, would prevent laboratory staff from acquiring the necessary technical competence. The PAZA II Project offered to assist the Director of ISUV to organize this training, if necessary. No request for support was received before the end of this reporting period.

**Table 1: Reports of disease occurrence made through Forms ‘A’ and ‘B’ submitted to the RUDA/ADI system**
3.3.2 Result 2 – Multi-annual, strategic programmes for the progressive control and eradication of priority animal diseases and major zoonoses are implemented effectively

3.3.2.1 Prepare the list of animal diseases to be addressed by official prophylactic measures.

During this reporting period, the project team did not progress with the revision of the list of diseases to be addressed by official prophylactic measures beyond those already being addressed. In the face of the BTV epidemic, the CVO and the veterinary directorate were overwhelmed and had insufficient capacity to address the project’s demands.

Consequently, the project was limited to a focus on:

a) the oral vaccination of foxes (expected result 3);

b) supporting the control of brucellosis in small ruminants through the vaccination of all replacement animals in the Spring of 2015;

c) the continued investigation of the aetiology of bovine brucellosis in Albania, through the collection of blood, milk and lymph node samples from slaughtered *Brucella* sero-positive cattle (for which the CVO would pay compensation to the owners of slaughtered animals);

d) monitoring the implementation of the anthrax control strategy proposed during the PAZA Project, which hinges on timely diagnosis of the disease in reported cases; and,

e) the completion of a pilot study of bovine tuberculosis, based on tracing back from cases detected at slaughter.

3.3.2.2 Establish multi-annual eradication programmes for each animal disease subject to official prophylactic measures.

During this reporting period, the veterinary directorate followed the plans that it had developed in 2013 and for which funding had been allocated for use in 2014. Against the advice of the project team, the veterinary directorate launched a national survey of bovine brucellosis, the outcome of which should eventually have informed the prophylactic measures that could be applied to control infections. However, the outcome of this work was not clear: test results were not sufficiently well collated for conclusions to be drawn on the epidemiological status of brucellosis in cattle. In total 25 884 bovines were sampled and the overall prevalence of brucellosis in cattle resulted 0.14%. However, the laboratory results were not analyzed during this reporting period. The project had proposed to plan and support a closely monitored bovine brucellosis survey in 2015.

The veterinary directorate reported that, in 2014, a total of 31 500 head of cattle were tested for tuberculosis: the prevalence of the disease in cattle was reported to be 0.08%. Data on the distribution of positive cases were not reported and no systematic submission of samples from slaughtered cattle occurred, meaning that the laboratory did
not receive material with which to work. The DSE submitted to the CVO a discussion document on the control of bovine tuberculosis (Annex 6), which included the results of tuberculin skin tests of 277 cattle on 141 holdings (households) in the village of Bllice, near Peshkopia, Diber. This case study pointed to the practical limitations of conducting surveillance in holdings where the average ‘herd’ size was two. Two of the 141 farms had animals that tested positive to the single intradermal comparative cervical tuberculin (SICCT) test, i.e., 1.4% of farms and three animals. Taken together with the finding of 0.08% prevalence obtained from the mass testing done by the veterinary service, the economics of this approach to screening has to be questioned, and abattoir based surveillance should be introduced. Animals found to be positive at postmortem could be traced back to their original holdings and more discrete testing could be done in a more cost effective manner.

3.3.2.3 Prepare operational plans for the delivery of eradication programmes and provide necessary training (initial and refresher) to relevant staff.

As previously explained (section 3.3.2.3, Interim report no. 1), the overriding need was for the establishment of the veterinary organizational structure as a prerequisite for the development of strategies for the control of priority diseases. However, this precondition remained unfulfilled (3.3.1.2).

The DSE reviewed and supervised implementation of the operational plan for the distribution of oral rabies vaccine during the autumn campaign (section 3.3.3).

3.3.2.4 Provide regular reports on progress within each eradication programme and the costs incurred in its delivery.

Animal identification underpins programmes to control and eliminate livestock diseases and the CVO had proposed the formation of a working group to focus on the national animal I&R system but in light of the distraction of the blue tongue virus epidemic no progress was made in reviewing the system.

The DSE reviewed the data available on the anthrax situation and produced a report (Annex 7). The main preventive control measure is vaccination of animals within villages that have a “history” of anthrax: the disease has usually been confirmed at regional laboratory, at ISUV, or – more frequently – simply on clinical grounds, including the presumed risk arising from a village’s proximity to an outbreak in a neighbouring area. In line with the strategy proposed by the PAZA Project in 2010, the number of vaccinated animals should decline as villages that have not had anthrax outbreaks in the previous 10 years are removed from the list of villages where vaccination is to be performed. For example, based on an analysis of outbreaks in 2014, 34 villages should have been excluded from the list of to be covered by the 2015 campaign.

Although the number of animals vaccinated in recent years had declined, there was no consequent increase in the number of reported cases of anthrax, with the possible exception of 2012. Spatial and temporal data from the regional laboratories before 2012 was severely influenced by two factors:
- Data were collected in situations where enforcement of accurate reporting did not occur, which probably decreased the number of reported cases; and,

- Recorded suspect cases were not always confirmed by laboratory tests. When laboratory tests were conducted, the diagnosis was established only by microscopic identification at the regional laboratories: the confirmation of the disease by prescribed laboratory methods was not performed. The absence of differential diagnosis and final confirmation of the disease probably increases the apparent number of cases.

Therefore, taking these factors into account, detailed analysis of the epidemiological situation on the basis of these factors was not justified and reliable epidemiological inferences cannot be drawn. The number of reported cases between 2006 and 2014 fluctuated from a peak of 40 cases in 2012 to 7 cases in 2013.

**Table 2: Number of animals vaccinated against anthrax**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of listed villages</th>
<th>Sheep and goats</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Pigs</th>
<th>Equines</th>
<th>Financial resources (ALL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>854.000</td>
<td>150.000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>33.120.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>902.200</td>
<td>134.000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>33.766.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>600.000</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>23.000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013*</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>500.600</td>
<td>79.600</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>18.998.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>424.455</td>
<td>60.935</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014**</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>376.611</td>
<td>37.786</td>
<td>10.888</td>
<td>9.652</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015***</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>363.625</td>
<td>29.359</td>
<td>9.268</td>
<td>6.937</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:

- Not available – NA
- * Data according to SVS
- ** Data according to NVEU
- *** Foreseen and excluding 34 villages that should be removed from the list

**Source:** NVEU and SVS

The main conclusions on the anthrax situation until 2012 can be summarized as:

1. **Passive reporting.** Farmers in Albania are aware about the disease, however, the number of passively reported suspect cases is probably underestimated in conditions when unified response from the SVS is not enforced.

2. **Preventive vaccination** as implemented until 2012 was not evidence based. Animals from many villages remain to be at risk since there were no reported cases. At the same time, animals in many villages were preventively vaccinated only based on clinical suspicion or preliminary diagnosis of the disease and without sustained risk analysis.
Figure 1: Numbers of cases of anthrax reported annually 2006 to 2014

3. Submitted samples for laboratory confirmation were completely inappropriate and contraindicated on grounds of biosafety.

4. Control measures were targeted only to vaccination of animals. No further control measures were implemented especially aiming to result in decreasing of the number of bacteria spores in the environment. As a result, animals within outbreak area are at continued risk and further outbreaks may occur in cases when animal is not vaccinated or the vaccination did not produce immunity (for any reason), even if several years passed since the last outbreak.

5. In many cases disposal of carcasses was done inappropriately and in fact only perpetuate the risk.

6. Cooperation with public health authorities on district level is established but there is no written common approach in case of outbreaks.

7. Vaccine production does not have written procedures to guarantee the quality of the vaccine used.

8. Laboratory diagnosis was not performed in all suspect cases. Diagnosis at regional laboratories was not sufficient to confirm the disease in line with OIE standards. Diagnosis at ISUV was assessed as compliant with OIE standards.

In 2012, the PAZA project proposed an amended strategy for the control of anthrax. The strategy introduced a risk-based approach, which was partially adopted by the SVS. The implementation started in 2013. The main outcomes of the adopted strategy are:

1. All reported suspect cases were laboratory confirmed at ISUV. Therefore, the confirmed laboratory results can be confidently regarded as “confirmed outbreaks”.

2. In 2014, specimens consisted mainly of nasal swabs (usually accompanied by blood samples); blood samples alone; six were spleen samples. This can be regarded as a great improvement compared to the previous period when pieces of spleen or ears were submitted for laboratory analysis, which is absolutely contraindicated on grounds of biosafety. Specimens for laboratory confirmation were triple packed and
transported by the Albanian Post Office courier service, which was very efficient.

3. Much improvement remained to be done in regards to the labelling and traceability: the ear tag numbers of the animals sampled were recorded for only 7 of the 52 samples submitted in 2014, meaning that traceability was not generally achieved.

4. Measures that have been implemented in case of suspicion and confirmation of the disease, including the disposal of carcases, did not differ from the previous years and was assessed to be insufficient.

5. In 2013 and 2014, a total of 18 outbreaks of anthrax were confirmed: 13 of these occurred in 12 villages in four districts. This indicates that the magnitude of the problem is not uniformly distributed in the country. Seven of 18 outbreaks (40%) occurred in villages with previous “history” of the disease.

The main recommendations may be summarized as:

1. Preventive vaccination should continue to be risk based. The list of villages needs to be updated annually.

2. Final laboratory confirmation of the disease should be conducted at AHD – ISUV.

3. Much improvement is required in implementation of additional control measures in case of suspicion or confirmation of the outbreak.

4. The specimen submission system needs to be sustained.

5. Inconsistent data was received from the two sources consulted: NVEU (RUDA) and SVS (data collected for the payment of activities) indicating the existence of parallel systems for collection of data.

6. Absence of appropriate I&R system precludes traceability.

7. As a priority, the AHD-ISUV should be linked to the animal health information system by the development of LIMS module to integrate it with the RUDA system.

The second oral rabies vaccination (ORV) campaign began on 16 October 2014 (see 3.3.3 below) and a report on the quality of the ORV distribution was produced.

The final report assessing the effectiveness of the ORV will be produced when laboratory results from the blood and brain specimens from foxes will be tested.

Monitoring reports on the brucellosis vaccination programme and ORV campaign will be produced after the project team receives data on post-vaccination monitoring from the national coordinators for the two diseases. Thereafter, interim and annual reports will be prepared related to all disease control programmes.
3.3.3 Result 3 – Risk of human exposure to rabies from infected foxes in Albania is progressively reduced and eliminated foxes

3.3.3.1 Assess the arrangements made by the vaccine supplier to handle, store, transport and distribute the vaccine baits.

The project liaised closely with the local representative of the EU’s Contractor for the supply of the rabies vaccine and monitored the organization of vaccine delivery, storage and distribution (Annex 8).

The project team worked closely with the National Rabies Coordinator and liaised with the Albanian authorities, i.e., veterinary service, Institute of Public Health, Civil Aviation Authority for approval of flights, Ministry of Defence who granted use of the military airfield at Kucovë during the vaccine distribution, and Ministry of Environment regarding permits to shoot foxes.

The Disease Surveillance Expert (DSE) and I&ASE assessed all documentation submitted by the contractor; checked again the training programme for pilots and assured that pilots understood the scope and objective of the assignment. In addition, the project team checked the working condition of the distribution equipment.

The project’s DSE scrutinized the detailed plan for the aerial distribution of vaccine and made recommendations on its modification to the beneficiary and the Project Manager. He also developed a monitoring plan to monitor and assure the quality of the ORV campaign to distribute bait vaccine (Interim report no. 1, Annex 9).

Procedures were agreed for the format for daily transfer of data on distributed baits, and the project experts audited all submitted documentation including laboratory certificates.

The project submitted a report to the Project Manager and National Project Coordinator before the campaign, on the Contractor’s preparedness, infrastructure, procedures including tests results, on the basis of which the ORV campaign was started.

Outputs from this activity included reports from the key expert and coordinator prepared prior to the campaign, which evaluated:

- the vaccine supplier’s implementation plan & operational manual
- the infrastructure and procedures foreseen to protect the cold chain (including an assessment of the capacity and reliability of cold storage facilities, procedures for handling vaccines at remote locations);

3.3.3.2 Monitor the quality of the baits supplied during each vaccination campaign.

The project worked closely with the National Rabies Coordinator and the DSE used standard procedures to check the quality of the baits supplied. A total of 560 000 baits were received in three batches (Table 3).
Table 3: Vaccine baits received in Albania for 2014 Autumn ORV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch number</th>
<th>Number of boxes</th>
<th>Number of baits</th>
<th>Production date</th>
<th>Expiry date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8890114-A</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>268,000</td>
<td>27.01.2014</td>
<td>06.02.2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>700</strong></td>
<td><strong>560,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contractor provided data on storage at the cold store from 28.04.2014 until 22.09.2014 and from 22.09.2014 until 29.09.2014, which confirmed an appropriate temperature regime for the indicated period.

Initially, vaccine was tested at the Paul-Ehrlich Institute (PEI) (EU/EEA Official Control Authority Batch Release-OCABR) which issued official results on 14.08.2014 (Table 4).

Table 4: Results of testing batches of vaccine supplied for the campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch number</th>
<th>Dates of testing</th>
<th>Titre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8821213-C</td>
<td>23.07-25.07.2014</td>
<td>6.9 log\textsuperscript{10} FFU /ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8890114-A</td>
<td>23.07-25.07.2014</td>
<td>6.9 log\textsuperscript{10} FFU /ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8930214-A</td>
<td>23.07-25.07.2014</td>
<td>6.8 log\textsuperscript{10} FFU /ml</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the laboratory testing performed at PEI only partially fulfilled the requirements stated in the Article 25 of the Special Conditions of the contract, the samples were sent to the OIE Reference Laboratory at the Friedrich-Loeffler Institute (FLI) in Germany where required laboratory tests were performed. Samples were collected on the last day of the autumn ORV. The repeated laboratory testing produced satisfactory results (Annex 6 of Annex 8): the results on the vaccine virus titre and vaccine virus stability after exposure for 7 days on 25°C were in compliance with the vaccine specifications. The bait casing remained intact under all conditions tested. At 40°C the consistency of the bait casing became sticky and soft but still remained intact. Therefore, the melting point of the bait casing above 40°C complied with EU recommendations.

To ensure constant supervision of the field operations, the project again deployed a field-based monitor, who conducted daily checks on the conditions of the storage of the imported vaccine baits and monitored compliance with prescribed procedures in the cold store and airfields: he despatched daily records to the project office.

The project collected and submitted all documentary evidence (data logger reports) regarding the cold chain during the whole process (from vaccine manufacture until the day of the distribution of baits), and monitored the cold chain throughout from the delivery in the central cold store until the loading into the aircraft.
All data were placed in an ORV dossier that was provided to the Project Manager and the Beneficiary: a copy was kept at the project office.

3.3.3.3 Monitor the performance of the vaccine supplier during each vaccination campaign.

The project team maintained daily contact with the local representative of the vaccine supplier during the vaccination campaign and reviewed activities and progress.

The project’s full-time field-based monitor performed checks at the airfield and senior project staff made unannounced spot checks during the period when vaccination activities took place.

The Consortium again mobilized a Wildlife & Rabies Monitoring expert who worked closely with the project’s GIS expert to analyse data on a daily basis during the campaign. These activities supplemented the daily documentary checks on the reports received from the vaccine supplier’s representative and the project’s field monitor.

The distribution of baits was generally satisfactory but it was observed that improvement is required in regards to the distribution of vaccine baits over lakes and especially urban areas. Whereas the distribution of vaccine baits over lakes may be regarded as a loss of vaccine baits, the distribution of vaccine baits over urban areas is regarded as an increased risk of human contact with potential hazard, namely a live virus vaccine.

On the basis of these observations, the DSE recommended that planning of future ORV campaigns should use a shape file with a more precise indication of urban areas, and that the contractor shall adjust flight lines to avoid distribution of vaccine baits over urban areas.

It was concluded that the adopted model for continuous monitoring and analysis of the results of the ORV distribution should be maintained and strengthened.

To improve coverage of vaccine distribution of areas adjacent to international borders, the project team proposed meeting the veterinary authorities of neighbouring countries that are also implementing ORV campaigns.

The most significant shortcoming of the 2014 Autumn ORV was that a moderately large surface area (approximately 200 km²) in the eastern part of the country was not treated, possibly because of a shortage of baits due to their distribution either over urban areas or higher bait density over other target areas. However, if the distribution of the vaccine baits was to be interrupted frequently over larger urban areas, it might lead to the less uniform distribution of baits around those areas. The analysis of records of distribution showed that 89% baits were distributed at intervals of 80 to 130 m, which indicated high uniformity of the distance between baits. An additional analysis of coverage of bait distribution showed that 3.8% (987.5 km²) were not covered. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the results were judged to have been satisfactory since the small, untreated areas should not greatly influence the efficacy of the campaign in the context of the 5-year ORV programme.
Corrective measures - possibly by means of manual distribution over the larger urban areas - might be considered. The team will hold a meeting with the Contracting Authority (the EU Project Manager), the beneficiary and the Contractor prior to the next ORV campaign (Spring 2015).

3.3.3.4 Prior to each vaccination campaign, deliver public awareness information and provide guidance to health authorities and local government services;

In the previous reporting period, the project’s Communication Expert worked with local experts and counterpart staff to develop and start implementation of the project’s communication strategy. The integrated actions to support the first national oral rabies vaccination (ORV) campaign were repeated during the second campaign in October.

Prior to this, the project sponsored an event convened by the National Federation of Hunters in Lushnje on 28 September 2015, World Rabies Day, as a means to announce their support for the ORV programme, and promote the participation of their organization in post-vaccination monitoring. The project supported this initiative, which reflects the approach of 'think global, act local.'

The project strategy used multiple channels of communication to ensure the maximum level of awareness of the ORV campaign. The Project manager reduced the allocation of funds for television broadcasts, which resulted in full use being made of regional television channels and only one national television station. The project made several contracts with service providers (a media agency, web site specialist, one national TV station, and printing studios) regarding the implementation of the awareness campaign on vaccination against rabies. The contractors provided the awareness materials copies of which were received at the project office.

The project disseminated awareness campaign materials different stakeholders and to the wider public. Stakeholder groups included the public health service, agricultural extension service, forest administration, SVS, hunters’ federation, schools and local government. Through these communication channels the project distributed 31,925 posters, 277,900 leaflets 7,210 factsheets.

Posters were distributed to 2 000 schools, all Official Veterinarians and private veterinary practitioners (PVPs) for display in all communes and most villages. The project paid the postal charges for dispatch of printed materials to schools and to the 600 PVPs and 36 district veterinary offices. The postal system was again very effective and efficient in the distribution of materials for the second ORV campaign.

A TV spot for the ORV campaign was broadcast and a film on rabies that had been produced by the project was distributed for use by the regional television stations. A website www.lufto-terbimit.al was created and one film on rabies produced by the project was distributed for use by the regional television stations.

3.3.3.5 Support the continued development of rabies diagnostics at ISUV.

On 27 March 2014, the Minister ARDWA appointed a National Coordinator for the ORV programme. The project continued to assist her to coordinate all rabies activities.
In August 2014, a case of suspected rabies was reported of a fox that behaved aggressively towards a farmer in Ujmisht village, Kukes region. The fox was shot and its head was submitted to ISUV where rabies diagnostic tests were done. Smears of the fox’s brain material produced positive IFAT results and rabies virus was isolated after mouse inoculation. As a result of the project’s awareness raising activities, when two other suspected cases occurred – one fox and one dog - samples from each were submitted to ISUV for testing. Both were found to be negative. The DSE mediated between ISUV and the EU rabies reference centre, ANSES in France; the latter agreed to pay for the transportation of the specimens and conduct tests. The Animal Health Department sent samples from all three cases to the ANSES laboratory, for confirmatory diagnosis, and the results confirmed ISUV’s findings (Annex 9). By the end of the reporting period, results of genetic typing of the positive case were available (Annex 9a). They confirmed that the red fox from Albania was infected with rabies antigen, infectious virus and viral RNA. The phylogenetic analysis showed that the virus isolated from the fox belonged to the same EE group as isolates from neighboring countries.

By December, most of the essential materials for rabies diagnostics had been delivered to ISUV through an EU supply contract but the equipment was not commissioned before the end of the reporting period. In the absence of a fully operational range of diagnostic tests to monitor rabies, the project negotiated an agreement with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Skopje to support the analysis of tetracycline and anti-rabies antibody in specimens from foxes shot to monitor the first ORV campaign. The project was authorized to support one veterinary laboratory scientist (the national rabies coordinator) to travel to Skopje to test the ORV biomarker in the teeth of shot foxes, and to complete antibody detection tests on sera collected from the same foxes shot to monitor the first ORV campaign. This arrangement was necessary since the facilities did not exist at ISUV to do these tests. However, the fluorescent microscope at the Skopje laboratory was out of service and thus not all tests could be completed and the work was delayed, which means that results of the efficacy of the first two ORV campaigns were not available by mid-January 2015.

As soon as the EU-supplied equipment becomes operational, testing could be performed in Tirana, preferably with limited support from the veterinary laboratory in Skopje and advice from the PAZA II Laboratory Expert.

The project sponsored the participation of the national rabies coordinator in a training workshop in France, where she was able to apply a ‘filter paper’ technique to collect blood from shot foxes for subsequent rabies antibody detection tests. The method could have immediate application in Albania and would simplify the collection of samples by hunters. It could also have applications in the diagnosis of other animal diseases.

3.3.3.6 Monitor the efficacy of the vaccination programme by collecting specimens during the post- vaccination period following each vaccination campaign.

The project team supported the application of the post-vaccination monitoring strategy in accordance with the terms of reference.
The project team prepared the monitoring plan, which specified the number and type of samples to be collected following each campaign in every area where vaccination has taken place. The procedures for the collection, packaging, transportation, analysis and reporting of results to the veterinary directorate were refined and adopted.

Once again, the project negotiated with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) for permission to shoot selected foxes in 16 districts. This was closely controlled since, in February 2014, the Government had announced a 2-year ban on hunting throughout the country.

The issuance of licences to hunters was delayed by administrative procedures but by 2 December, the MoE released a list of approved hunters. The project’s local Wildlife Expert and National Rabies Coordinator then visited the selected districts to train hunters in the collection of samples from shot foxes in the designated hunting areas.

Specimens were submitted via the postal courier system that the project had established but due to the slow rate of specimen submission, the Wildlife Expert made follow up visits to encourage hunters to complete the activity.

During these visits, he learned that MoE officers and the police had decided that the special hunting permits were not to be used at night – which is when foxes (nocturnal animals by nature) are normally most active (Annex 10). In one district, police arrested hunters and detained them overnight in a police station! A total of only 86 foxes were shot instead of the target of 211 foxes. Hunters were paid the €18 (ALL 2 500) fee for each fox they shot. An honorarium of €10 per fox was paid to district official veterinarians to correctly prepare specimens and dispatch them by post to the Animal Health Department at ISUV as a project activity.

A final report of the first two ORV campaigns was drafted (Annex 8): it will be finalized after the results of the laboratory tests are available.

A template was developed to include all expenses incurred in the collection, transport and analysis of monitoring samples, in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the EU Delegation. This will be refined and updated as costings are clarified, especially related to laboratory tests.

3.3.4 Result 4 – A sustainable, modern national communication system is established between the state veterinary service and key stakeholder groups

3.3.4.1 Identify and consult key stakeholder groups to plan a national veterinary communication system.

Little progress was made in consultations with the veterinary service largely because of the extremely low capacity of the veterinary directorate and the overwhelming impact of the BTV epidemic during this period.

The project had intermittent discussions with a mobile telephone service provider about the provision of a ‘free phone’ service for disease reporting. The concept was to link
disease reporting by SMS to the existing SMS module of the RUDA database and technical personnel discussed the harmonization of data transfer systems.

3.3.4.2 Review and support establishment of revised, appropriate lines of reporting and communication between and within key stakeholder groups.

Based on the output of initial consultations, the project team had prepared proposals for improved reporting but despite the intensive discussions on the restructuring of the veterinary service – which was expected to produce definitive reporting lines - by the end of December, there was no clarity on the subject (section 3.3.1).

The project continued to foster communication between key stakeholder groups, including schools and other stakeholders (hunters, veterinarians, academics, technical personnel).

3.3.4.3 Engage and deploy service providers to deliver inputs to the system.

The project continued to engage specialized service providers to prepare websites and video recordings of project activities, and also commissioned printers to prepare materials for use in awareness raising. A dossier of all publicity materials was kept at the project offices and was made available to the EU ROM Monitor who visited the project in June.

3.3.4.4 Develop messages, methods and standard operating procedures, and train relevant staff to use and maintain the system.

The project launched a national awareness campaign to support the implementation of the second ORV campaign (Activity 3.4), in line with the project’s communication strategy (section 3.3.3.4).

Although the Minister appointed two national coordinators – one for rabies, the other for anthrax and brucellosis – the project still had no counterpart for its communications activities.

3.3.4.5 Establish and apply criteria to monitor the performance of the system.

To develop an outcome mapping approach, the project has to establish a process of consultation with stakeholder representatives and boundary partners. However, since the process of reform was not completed, and in the absence of a counterpart for communications no such an initiative could be launched.
3.4 Resources and budget used

3.4.1 Personnel

The Consortium deployed the three key experts, who have a crucial role in project implementation; they spent more than 90% of their working time in Albania (Table 5). The Consortium’s Institutional and Administrative Support Expert (I&ASE) was maintained an essential continuous presence; he worked closely with stakeholders in all regions of Albania.

After the Minister’s announcement in July of the start of the reform of the veterinary service, the Consortium mobilized an international Veterinary Legislation Expert, who worked with a local Legal Expert.

The Wildlife and Rabies Monitoring Expert was again mobilized to support the analysis of data from the second ORV campaign: he worked closely with the project’s local GIS Expert. The project’s local Wildlife Expert supported the hunters in the collection of shot foxes in December.

The Media Liaison Expert and Awareness Expert were mobilized to support the vaccination campaigns against brucellosis and rabies.

Since the conditions were still not conducive, the Human Resource Expert was again not mobilized. Consequently, the project’s use of its human resource reflected the conditions on the ground and varied somewhat from the initial plan for deployment.

Project staff continued to work from the office established at the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute (FSVI/ISUV) in Tirana, where support staff included an office manager/logistician and a driver.

3.4.2 Equipment/Supplies

The Contracting Authority (Delegation of the EU to Albania) awarded a contract for the supply of equipment, vaccines, reagents and consumables required for project implementation. By the end of the reporting period, most of the items had been delivered and were stored at ISUV.

3.4.3 Funding for incidental expenditure (operational costs)

The Consortium made a series of proposals for the expenditure of funds on incidental expenditure in the course of implementation. The Programme Manager approved proposals through a system of administrative orders (Table 6).
### Table 5: Inputs by project experts (days) in the period July to December 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Days allocated</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Days used</th>
<th>Days remaining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Connor, Team Leader</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>J 14</td>
<td>12 13 14 8</td>
<td>153 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Kirandjiski, Disease Surveillance expert</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>J 16</td>
<td>1 13 22 9 6</td>
<td>106 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ieva Rodze, Laboratory expert</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>J  4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non Key Senior Experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ylli Pema, IS&amp;AE</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>J 21</td>
<td>21 22 22 17 18</td>
<td>233 517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulrich Roth, Communication expert</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>J  3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA, HRD Expert</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond O’Rourke, Legislation expert</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>J  3</td>
<td>1 8 5</td>
<td>17 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA (I&amp;R in the pig industry)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA (Veterinary epidemiology)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA (Unallocated, other)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paolo Tizzani, Wildlife &amp; Rabies Monitoring expert</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>J  5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non Key Junior Experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Coordinators</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>J 124</td>
<td>42 0 20</td>
<td>320 1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness expert, Elinda Sulejmani</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>J  2</td>
<td>4 6 4</td>
<td>31 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Liaison expert, Florian Papadimitri</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>J  5</td>
<td>13 5</td>
<td>38 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT expert, Alban Hasa</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>J  8</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife expert, Haki Zoto</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>J  4</td>
<td>6 5 8 17</td>
<td>45 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal expert, Artan Bozo</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>J  3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS expert, Valbona Simixhiu</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>J 11</td>
<td>8 3</td>
<td>35 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health expert, Silvia Bino</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>J  0</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>497 1903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TBA = To be advised.
Table 6: Administrative Orders issued during the period 16 July to 31 December 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.O. no.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Amount proposed (€)</th>
<th>Amount approved (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>18/07/2014</td>
<td>Proposals nos. 17 &amp; 18: BTB case study, Diber; mobilization of Legislation expert, and home-based days.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>30/09/2014</td>
<td>Proposal no. 19: Various Activities, BTB case Study in Diber Region; ORV campaign costs</td>
<td>35,695</td>
<td>26,295</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal no. 20: World Rabies Day; mobilize ORV field monitor; printing</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>1,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>28/10/2014</td>
<td>Proposal no. 21: One health proposal; Training for Hunters and OVs; Training in Animal Identification and Registration RUDA database</td>
<td>17,598</td>
<td>17,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>17/11/2014</td>
<td>Approval of 1st Interim report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>17/12/2014</td>
<td>Proposal no. 22: Weekend travel to monitor activities of hunters engaged to shoot foxes for rabies vaccination campaign</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal no. 23: Rabies Diagnostic-Training in validation of diagnostic method</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>1,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cumulative total incidental expenditure approved (€)</strong></td>
<td><strong>121,048</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Assumptions and risks

3.5.1 Assumptions

The important assumptions that were made in planning the project are included in the logical framework (Annex 1). An assessment of these assumptions was included in the Consortium’s technical proposal; this was reviewed during project inception and updated (Annex 8 of the Inception report).

3.5.2 Risks

The technical proposal included a detailed analysis of risks associated with the project’s planned activities. The project team reviewed and updated the analysis during the inception phase (Annex 9 of the Inception report) and again at the end of this reporting period (Annex 11). The project team implemented most main activities according to plan (Annex 12) but external factors prevented the team from commencing with others.
Overall, the project’s external environment continued to pose serious risks that jeopardize its potential success. The team continued to focus predominantly on the implementation of the activities linked to the oral vaccination of foxes, including the associated publicity campaigns. In November and December, the Team Leader and Legislation Expert were engaged in discussions on the reform of the food safety and veterinary system. Unless the system is reformed, project implementation can only be partial.

3.6 Management and co-ordination arrangements

The arrangements for the management and coordination of the project are described in the project’s terms of reference and the inception report.

The Delegation of the European Union to Albania, represented by the Programme Manager, was responsible for the management of the service contract with the consultant and, throughout this reporting period, he approved the Consortium’s proposals for implementation, and the associated incidental expenditure (Table 6).

As Project Beneficiary, the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MARDWA) was responsible for providing an enabling environment for the implementation of this contract. The MARDWA and, in particular, the veterinary directorate were responsible for facilitating the day to day implementation of this contract and were the primary recipients of all contract inputs and outputs.

During this reporting period, the understaffing of the veterinary directorate, the BTV epidemic and the stalled reform process seriously compromised the work between the Team Leader and the CVO on a day-to-day basis.

On 13 November, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) met under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of ARDWA, when the project presented its first interim report for the period to mid-July. The meeting as delayed as a result of the project team’s prolonged absence over the summer. Minutes of the meeting (Annex 13) were circulated to all participants.

The resignation of the CVO in December was a major setback for the project since the CVO was also the National Project Coordinator.

3.7 Financing arrangements

The European Union and the Government of Albania financed the project jointly. The EU Programme Manager authorized the utilization of part of the provision for incidental costs (Table 6). The provision for incidental expenditure covered the ancillary and exceptional eligible expenditure incurred under the contract. It was not used to meet costs covered by the Consultant as part of its fee rates.

Through the MARDWA, the Government of Albania had made available funds in its annual budgets for 2014 to pay the fees of private veterinary practitioners (PVPs) for the administration of vaccines, and the VAT on vaccines and aviation fuel to support project implementation.
The Government’s contribution was intended to meet the operational costs of staff and their mobility but budgets were severely constrained and field staff mobility continued to be a matter of concern since it directly affects the reliability of disease surveillance.

3.8 Key quality / Sustainability issues

Several key factors adversely affected the sustainability of the project’s contribution to the sector. The two overarching factors continued to be:

- the lack of clear direction for the reform of the state veterinary service to remedy its extreme fragmentation
- the chronic under-resourcing of the state veterinary service, both in terms of the extremely low numbers of staff at the central level, and the complete lack of resources to ensure the mobility of field staff

The report of the OIE assessment (June 2014) described these major failings in stark detail. They have to be addressed effectively, and soon, if the PAZA II Project is to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the state veterinary service. The resignation of the CVO in December posed a very serious setback to implementation.
4. WORKPLAN FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

4.1 Results to be delivered – quantity, quality and time

The results, or outputs, that the project is expected to deliver (deliverables) are broadly specified in the project’s terms of reference. These are indicated for each expected result below.

**Result 1** If and when the beneficiary decides on the direction of reform of the state veterinary service, the project will assist its re-organization, including reviewing the roles and responsibilities indicated by the requirements of the *Aquis*. As previously stated, these recommendations will take into consideration the provisions of a law on the veterinary order.

Thus, the deliverables would include:

1. Draft official orders and instructions implementing the surveillance system.
2. Draft rules and orders implementing the Veterinary Law of November 2011 and defining the veterinary surveillance duties.
3. Draft Memoranda of Understanding with Ministry of the Interior, the National Food Authority and the Public Health Institute.

**Result 2** The project team will continue to support the development and implementation of disease control programmes, specifically against brucellosis in small ruminants and cattle; tuberculosis in cattle; anthrax; and, rabies.

If reform of the SVS is launched, the deliverables would include:

4. List of priority animal diseases to be addressed by official prophylactic measures.
5. Draft official orders and instructions implementing eradication programmes.
6. Assessment report of resources available for control programmes (human, material and financial).
7. Minutes of meetings held with MAFCP and other institutions and agencies.
8. Multi-annual eradication programmes presented to the beneficiary authorities.
9. An operational plan prepared for each multi-annual eradication programme.
10. Records of each training event.
11. Annual progress reports of the eradication programme for each disease.

**Result 3** The project will monitor and support the implementation of the second oral rabies vaccination (ORV) campaign in autumn 2014, and will support the assessment of its impact through post-vaccination monitoring.
The deliverables would include:

12. Draft official reports issued by MAFCP concerning rabies vaccination campaigns.
13. Key expert and coordinator reports assessment of vaccine supplier’s infrastructural and operational arrangements prepared prior to each campaign.
15. Copies of quality assurance reports received for each campaign.
16. Field manual specifying the physical and documentary controls to be carried out during daily vaccination activities.
17. Written reports specifying the control methods that were applied, the results of the controls and, where appropriate, corrective action that the vaccine supplier should take.
18. Copies of all guidance materials and other information concerning rabies vaccination activities provided to health and local government authorities.
20. Procedures prepared defining the details of the implementation of the plan.
21. Annual reports providing details of the foxes monitored, including the number of samples obtained, date and location where shot and the results of laboratory analysis.

Result 4 The project will continue to address this major gap in the state veterinary service’s operational approach and will support awareness raising activities related to the second ORV campaign. In early January 2015, the team will initiate discussion with the CVO on the vaccination of replacement small ruminants against brucellosis.

The deliverables would include:

22. Copies of rabies vaccination awareness materials (TV/ radio spots, leaflets, posters, etc.), and reports on their use.
23. Schools programme with curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education.

4.2 Activity schedule for the period to 15 July 2015

4.2.1 Animal disease surveillance system (result 1)

4.2.1.1 Review, in close cooperation with the Animal Health Sector in the Ministry of Agriculture, the list of the priority animal diseases subject to surveillance in Albania.

The project team will monitor the number of disease outbreaks or occurrences reported by the epidemiology unit (Table 7), based on figures entered by district-based data managers. The team will emphasize the need for confirmatory laboratory diagnosis as the basis for strategic decisions, such as prioritization of animal diseases to be controlled.
4.2.1.2 **Develop a framework of implementing legislation under the Law on the Veterinary Service.**

Depending on progress in the restructuring of the state veterinary service, the consortium will mobilize the Legislation Expert and local Legal Expert to continue to assess the legislation gaps that the veterinary directorate needs to address. Particular attention will be paid to the establishment of a veterinary order.

4.2.1.3 **Establish functional tools enabling disease notification information and epidemiological data to flow through a national surveillance network.**

The Disease Surveillance Expert and the Laboratory Expert will continue to promote the development of a unified system of disease reporting and diagnosis, which will necessarily link field reporting through the RUDA/ADI system to a laboratory information management system (LIMS), through to epidemiological analysis and strategy formulation. The project again proposes to facilitate a participatory consultation with key stakeholders, to continue discussions that were initiated in 2014.

4.1.2.4 **Support the establishment of an effective and credible laboratory services in line with OIE (ISO 17025) standards.**

This activity is linked closely with the foregoing activity; it is dependent on the preconditions that the beneficiary has (a) prepared a national strategy for diagnostic veterinary laboratories, and (b) allocated sufficient funding to sustain essential elements of the quality management system, including routine calibration of metrological equipment.

4.1.2.5 **Complete training needs assessments for each element of the surveillance network and establish a progressive, sustainable training programme.**

Only after the beneficiary has decided on the new structure of the state veterinary service, and has developed a strategy for veterinary laboratories, would the project team be in a position to assist the development of job descriptions and, by matching these with staff in post, to identify skills gaps. The outcome of this process would provide a basis for the development of a training programme.

The project team will assist the development of laboratory diagnostic skills for the diagnostic examination of samples from foxes shot to monitor ORV campaigns, and undertake routine diagnosis. Assistance will be provided to use the equipment and materials procured through the EU supply tender.
4.2.2 Animal disease control

4.2.2.1 Prepare the list of animal diseases to be addressed by official prophylactic measures.

A preliminary list of priority diseases exists; it will be reviewed (Table 8) in light of reports received from the field. The project team will maintain a dialogue with the beneficiary to promote an evidence-based approach to decision-making.

4.2.2.2 Establish multi-annual eradication programmes for each animal disease.

During the third reporting period, the project will support the continued implementation of the national strategies for the control of brucellosis in small ruminants through the vaccination of replacement animals, and the control of rabies in foxes.

The project will continue to assist the CVO on the organization of a national survey of bovine brucellosis.

The findings of the case study of bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in a village in Diber region will be used to inform discussions with the veterinary directorate on options for the control of the disease. The project team will continue to challenge the expectation of conducting large-scale tuberculin testing since it is quite unrealistic to expect such a programme to produce reliable results. The systems are not in place to collate data to inform decision-making.

4.2.2.3 Prepare operational plans for the delivery of eradication programmes and provide necessary training (initial and refresher) to relevant staff.

Early preparations will be made for the implementation of the 2015 vaccination campaign to control brucellosis in small ruminants; the project team will be fully engaged in monitoring the third ORV campaign (section 4.2.3).

4.2.2.4 Produce regular reports on progress within each eradication programme and the costs incurred in its delivery.

The results of monitoring the vaccination of small ruminants will be analysed: they will be used to guide the organization of future campaigns.

Similarly, the analysis and recommendations for the implementation of anthrax control programme will be completed. Analysis of the costs incurred will be used to support the veterinary directorate's budget allocation.

4.2.3 Oral rabies vaccination of foxes

4.2.3.1 Assess the arrangements made by the vaccine supplier to handle, store, transport and distribute the vaccine baits.

The team will again assess in detail the logistical arrangements made by the supplier for the handling, storage and distribution of the ORV baits (Table 9).
4.2.3.2 Monitor the quality of the baits supplied during each vaccination campaign.

The project will assist the National Rabies Coordinator to monitor the ORV baits quality: samples will be sent to an EU reference laboratory for assays of virus titres and bait quality.

4.2.3.3 Monitor the performance of the vaccine supplier during each vaccination campaign.

The project will again deploy a field-based monitor at the Kucovë military airbase, who will monitor all operations on a daily basis, and report daily to the project team. The DSE and I&ASE will supervise the operation together with the National Rabies Coordinator.

4.2.3.4 Produce and disseminate public awareness information and provide guidance to health authorities and local government services.

The project’s Media Liaison expert and Awareness expert will work with implementation partners to distribute publicity materials and raise awareness of the project’s activities, especially concerning the ORV campaign. The National Federation of Hunters will be encouraged to continue to be a protagonist for the vaccination of foxes and the monitoring programme.

4.2.3.5 Support the continued development of rabies diagnostics at ISUV.

The project’s Laboratory Expert will continue to assist the development of rabies diagnostics, and the examination of samples from foxes shot to monitor the ORV campaigns. Assistance will be provided, as necessary, with the commissioning of the equipment procured through the EU supply tender.

4.2.3.6 Monitor the efficacy of the vaccination programme.

The project team will again liaise with the hunters’ federation and extend the number of districts in which the fox population will be sampled. Hunters and official veterinarians will be trained to collect samples, which will be transported through the postal service to ISUV for examination. The results of laboratory analysis will indicate the efficacy of the ORV campaigns in 2015.

4.2.4 National veterinary communication system

4.2.4.1 Identify and consult key stakeholder groups to plan a national veterinary communication system.

The project team will continue to seek opportunities to establish improved means of communication within the state veterinary service, and between the service and main stakeholder groups (Table 10).
There will be continued emphasis on the improvement of the disease reporting system, the RUDA system and a laboratory information management system (sections 4.1.2.3 and 4.1.2.4).

4.2.4.2 Review and support establishment of revised, appropriate lines of reporting and communication between and within key stakeholder groups.

Progress in this activity will depend largely on the definition of the new veterinary structure.

4.2.4.3 Engage and deploy service providers to deliver inputs to the communication system.

In the implementation of the ORV campaign, the project will commission the services of the media and will place further emphasis on the schools as effective channels of communication of information related to zoonotic diseases and their control.

4.2.4.4 Develop messages, methods and standard operating procedures, and train relevant staff to use and maintain the system.

The outbreak of blue tongue virus infections at the end of July 2014 illustrated the need for effective communication of simple messages to livestock owners. The project will use this event as an example for the development of appropriate messages to animal keepers.

4.2.4.5 Establish and apply criteria to monitor the performance of the system.

The beneficiary will be encouraged to appoint a communication specialist to take charge of routine organization of a veterinary communication system, and this function should be included in the new structure of the state veterinary service.

4.3 Resource schedule and budget

The continued lack of clarity regarding reporting relationships in the veterinary structures would prevent the project from implementing a range of activities. The EU Project Manager advised that, under these conditions, the mobilization of project experts who were not to be involved with the ORV campaigns should be delayed.
Table 7: Indicative work plan related to animal disease surveillance to July 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Activity 1.1: Review, in close cooperation with the Animal Health Sector in the Ministry of Agriculture, the list of the priority animal diseases subject to surveillance in Albania.</th>
<th>Result 1 Activity 1.2: Develop a framework of implementing legislation under the Law on the Veterinary Service.</th>
<th>Result 1 Activity 1.3: Establish functional tools enabling disease notification information and epidemiological data to flow through a national surveillance network.</th>
<th>Result 1 Activity 1.4: Support the establishment of an effective and credible laboratory services in line with OIE (ISO 17025) standards.</th>
<th>Result 1 Activity 1.5: Complete training needs assessments for each element of the surveillance network and establish a progressive, sustainable training programme.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 8: Indicative work plan related to animal disease control to July 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Activity 2.1: Prepare the list of animal diseases to be addressed by official prophylactic measures.</th>
<th>Result 2 Activity 2.2: Establish multi-annual eradication programmes for each animal disease.</th>
<th>Result 2 Activity 2.3: Prepare operational plans for the delivery of eradication programmes and provide necessary training (initial and refresher) to relevant staff.</th>
<th>Result 2 Activity 2.4: Produce regular reports on progress within each eradication programme and the costs incurred in its delivery.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Table 9: Indicative work plan related to oral rabies vaccination to July 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result 3</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.1: Assess the arrangements made by the vaccine supplier to handle, store, transport and distribute the vaccine baits.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.2: Monitor the quality of the baits supplied during each vaccination campaign.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.3: Monitor the performance of the vaccine supplier during each vaccination campaign.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.4: Produce and disseminate public awareness information and provide guidance to health authorities and local government services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 3.5: Support the continued development of rabies diagnostics at ISUV.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 3.6: Monitor the efficacy of the vaccination programme.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Indicative work plan related to veterinary communication to July 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result 4</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.1: Identify and consult key stakeholder groups to plan a national veterinary communication system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.2: Review and support establishment of revised, appropriate lines of reporting and communication between and within key stakeholder groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.3: Engage and deploy service providers to deliver inputs to the system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.4: Develop messages, methods and standard operating procedures, and train relevant staff to use and maintain the system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.5: Establish and apply criteria to monitor the performance of the system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only after the organizational structure of Albania’s veterinary services has been aligned to the norms and standards accepted by the OIE will it be possible to mobilize the remaining project experts. The situation will be kept under review. Therefore, the core project team will be mobilized as necessary to support planned activities (Table 11). The mobilization of other experts – for example, the human resources expert - will depend upon the decision of the beneficiary on whether or not to reform the public veterinary services.

Table 11: Proposed inputs of experts in the period January to June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Days allocated</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Total days planned</th>
<th>Balance (days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease Surveillance expert</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory expert,</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior non-key experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS&amp;AE</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Expert</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRD Expert</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation expert</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig I&amp;R expert</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary pathology expert</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unallocated experts</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior non-key experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field coordinators</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication: Public awareness</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Liaison expert</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT and animal databases (fluent in A)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife expert</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal expert</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS expert</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health expert</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unallocated (Other)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total days</strong></td>
<td>2400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Yellow highlight denotes expected timing of Spring ORV campaign.
4.4 Updated risk management plan

As stated above, the risks identified for each of the project’s main activities were reviewed (Annex 11), and the project team will keep them under review. The main responses to mitigate risks will include:

- maintaining close contact and dialogue with implementation partners, especially the main beneficiary – the CVO, who is also the National Project Coordinator;
- informing the EU Project Manager of the need for his intervention if the project team fails to resolve obstacles or secure adequate active collaboration;
- reporting to the Chairman of the Project Steering Committee any issues that require his intervention; and,
- through the National Project Coordinator, reporting to the Inter-ministerial Committee all issues pertaining to the ORV campaigns.

4.5 Special activities to support sustainability

The project team will promote the sustainability of the project’s approach, outputs and outcomes, whenever possible. The project will address various cross cutting issues and will establish linkages of this project with other relevant actions and projects.

Specifically, the project will use manuals and guidelines that have already been developed, where possible, for example, the data management systems; disease reporting forms (A and B); disease control strategies; and, diagnostic protocols. The Project team will implement activities taking into account environmental standards, particularly related to the disposal of animal waste (or by-product) materials.

In broad terms, the project will provide equal opportunities to all participants and employees regardless religion, gender, nationality, age, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

It has to be repeated that, overall, the external environment within which the project is implemented poses numerous risks that jeopardize its potential success. It is the responsibility of the project’s financing partners to ensure that conditions for effective project implementation are conducive.
### Annexes to the 2nd Interim Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1</td>
<td>PAZA II Logical framework matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2</td>
<td>PAZA II Blue tongue outbreak in Greece near border with Albania Operational Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 5</td>
<td>PAZA II Laboratory expert Mission report no. 3 - Nov 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6</td>
<td>PAZA II Preliminary considerations for tuberculosis control programme in Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6a</td>
<td>PAZA II DSE Mission report no. 04 – Aug 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 7</td>
<td>PAZA II Review of anthrax situation in Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 8</td>
<td>PAZA II Final report of the 2014 Autumn Oral Rabies Vaccination Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9</td>
<td>ANSES Laboratory results 54_55_56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annex 9a</td>
<td>ANSES Genotyping_Report DR914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 10</td>
<td>PAZA II Monitoring fox ORV - winter 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 11</td>
<td>PAZA II Analysis of risks to planned activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 12</td>
<td>PAZA II IR-2 Activities Monitoring Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 13</td>
<td>PAZA II DRAFT Minutes of 2nd meeting of the PSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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