LIFE Project

Dossier de
 la rÃ©daction de H2o
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RESTORE - Rivers:

Engaging, Supporting and Transferring knOwledge for Restoration in Europe

River ecosystems throughout Europe have been severely impacted by engineering projects for flood protection, navigation, water supply and hydroelectricity. It is estimated that less than 20% of Europe's rivers and floodplains are in their natural state and many species have been lost. The role of river restoration, often promoting soft' engineering solutions, as a tool to reserve some of the problems associated with damage to these ecosystems has grown considerably in recent decades, particularly at the local level. The aim of river restoration is to re-establish self-sustaining environments and to restore complete ecosystems. Applying sustainable river restoration serves both the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive at several levels. River restoration at the local level aims to create and improve habitat conditions for key species; at regional level supports the Natura 2000 network; and across Europe can improve the entire ecological status of river basins. River restoration can also assist with adaptation to climate change by strengthening ecological networks and providing climate space. River restoration activities also play a crucial role in developing best practice approaches for flood risk management, especially through flood storage, serving the interests of the EU Floods Risks Directive. The overall river restoration effort is hindered, however, not by a lack of expertise at the local level but by a lack of opportunities for sharing best practice and knowledge. Addressing this gap in knowledge transfer is the main aim of the RESTORE' project.

Objectives - The project will develop a network linking policymakers, river basin planners, practitioners and experts across Europe to share information and good practice on river restoration activities. The main objectives are:

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To support river restoration practices across Europe. A database of river restoration projects will be created, providing understanding of policy opportunities and constraints, the effectiveness of restoration methods, design issues and project costs/benefits;

- To build up existing river restoration network capacity. Several river restoration networks are already established. The project will provide a European forum to support existing and emerging networks and will help identify the needs of networks and the barriers to effective operation and co-operation; and

- To promote effective river restoration knowledge transfer. The project will support the work of existing networks in communicating best practice. Tools to promote knowledge transfer will also be developed and used to communicate key messages to target audiences.

Expected results - The production of communication plans at regional and European level; Preparatory reviews of current policy, planning and project activity; and The development of a river restoration handbook to be published in print and online form.

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