



Guidance on the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy River Restoration Targets

Project

Duration

Dec 2020 - Apr 2021

The importance of free-flowing rivers that allow free movement of water, sediment, fish and other organisms is increasingly recognised by European environmental policy, in particular the [Water Framework Directive](#) (WFD) and the [Biodiversity Strategy 2030](#) adopted under the European Green Deal. A very high number of barriers on rivers though have led to the loss of river continuity in Europe (see estimations for over 1 million barriers in the [AMBER project](#)). The WFD environmental objective of good status for European waters is a very strong instrument to restore river continuity especially for migrating species. However, considering the very high number of barriers present on rivers in Europe, it is necessary to develop strategies for prioritising measures taken for continuity restoration. The Biodiversity Strategy 2030 reinforced the importance of restoring river continuity by setting a target of "at least 25,000 km of rivers to be restored into free-flowing rivers by 2030 through the removal of primarily obsolete barriers and the restoration of floodplains and wetlands".

The Biodiversity Strategy 2030 also set an obligation for the European Commission to deliver by 2021 technical guidance and support to the Member States to identify sites for river restoration and help mobilise funding. DG Environment in the Commission together with the Joint Research Centre are leading this initiative to elaborate the technical and scientific basis for this guidance.

Ecologic Institute has been contracted to support the European Commission in preparing a draft version of the Guidance on the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy river restoration targets, thereby bringing together existing knowledge and technical input from different contributors into a coherent document.

Funding

European Commission, [Directorate-General Environment](#) (DG Environment),
International

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Duration

Dec 2020 - Apr 2021

Project ID

[50045](#)

Keywords

[Biodiversity](#)

[Water](#)

Biodiversity Strategy, Water Framework Directive, free flowing rivers, river restoration, floodplain restoration, wetlands, guidance
Europe

Source URL: <https://www.ecologic.eu/17662>