



GOOD PRACTICE

Title of the practice

Cross border development of Niers river valley

Detailed description of the practice

The River Niers is a Meuse tributary of 120 km which originates in Germany and flows for 12 km in the Dutch province of Limburg, where it enters into the River Meuse. For 4 km it forms the common border between Germany and The Netherlands. Several transboundary problems on ecological functioning, water quality and local flood problems were at the basis for both countries to develop a joint cross-border river restoration plan for the lower 20 km of the river valley.

In the Niers river restoration plan, this stretch was divided into 7 smaller areas. These areas are suitable for the development of starting-projects. Starting-projects were initiated in relatively small floodplain areas in which the restoration measures could be taken since the grounds (former farmlands) were acquired on a voluntary basis during the planning process. The idea of such step-wise plan realization was to gain experience with this new form of river management and to create public support for the implementation of the plan. In the normalized and canalized German river stretches the focus was on the restoration of the original meandering river by reconnection and reactivation of the former river channel. In the Dutch stretches the focus was on restoration of a former side channel. So, in both countries the floodplain was transformed from farmlands into nature reserves. As a result the river has more room for flood mitigation. In addition wetlands habitats have been reactivated, which resulted in the return of several typical river species, such as the Beaver, which has been extinct in the area for many years.



Evidence of success

A joint cross-border plan was made dealing with the interests of many stakeholders and several projects were carried out.

Location of the practice

Country: *The Netherlands*

City: *Maastricht*

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