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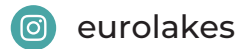
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PROGRAMME: Horizon Europe (MISSION OCEAN)

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⏱ September 2024 – August 2028

EUROLakes

Safeguarding and restoring European natural lakes and their ecosystems

Coordinated by
Wetlands International Europe

Part of the
EUMISSIONS
RESTORE OUR OCEAN & WATERS

THE PROJECT

EUROLakes project proposes an innovative, holistic and science-based approach to safeguarding and restoring European natural lakes and their ecosystems. It builds upon the **4 Returns Framework for Landscape Restoration** (4RF), a practical methodology designed to seek sustainable, long-term solutions at the landscape level, with the aim of achieving four types of returns: inspiration, social benefits, natural restoration, and financial gains.

Key elements of 4RF's implementation:

- **Establish a landscape partnership**
- **Foster shared understanding**
- **Collaboratively envision the landscape**
- **Take coordinated action**
- **Continuous monitoring and learning**

In cooperation with established local communities of practice, the project will develop and showcase the integrated nature-based protection and restoration solutions in three specific areas: **Lake Vico in Italy, Lake Bistreţ in Romania and Lake Dümmer in Germany.**

OBJECTIVES

Human activity, from local practices to large-scale basin management, is putting significant pressure on the ecological health of European natural lakes, negatively impacting the environment through water over-extraction, pollution, eutrophication, and disruptions to the natural flow and structure of the lakes. **EUROLakes project addresses these challenges** using the 4RF. It builds upon existing regional measures while considering stakeholder interests and needs.

Design integrated and replicable landscape approaches for protecting and restoring selected natural lakes in Italy, Romania and Germany; and continuously monitor and adapt all site-specific measures.

Enable long-term socio-economic transition for lake restoration by delivering trainings on ecosystem services' valuation and identifying sustainable financing opportunities.

Implement advanced modelling techniques to simulate the impact of our approaches on lake ecosystems.

Support the replication and scale-up of the demonstrated solutions by local and regional authorities.

Support the replication and scale-up of the demonstrated solutions by local and regional authorities, defined by an open call.

Advocate for policy implementation that fosters the replication and upscaling of these solutions, enhancing the delivery of the European Green Deal.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Local communities of practice are well-informed and empowered to participate in their lake decision-making process.

2. Restoration implementation plans, allowing for continuous data and stakeholder driven optimization.

3. An economic valuation of the ecosystem services provided to society and nature at the lake demo sites.

4. A set of financing opportunities to support lake restoration at landscape scale.

5. Training materials for economic transition, including the role of green finance and private investment.

6. Action plans and roadmaps in support of replication projects' implementation.

7. Policy recommendations supporting lake ecosystems.

8. Localized demonstrative protection and restoration measures and nature-based solutions, addressing challenges specific to the case studies

9. An open-source data modelling framework including water quantity and quality, biodiversity and economics.

10. Digital twins platform to develop water quality & biodiversity management strategies, and predict the impact of changes to the water body.