

## Tavel report

### **Networking visit to the „Stream of Usserød” project**

**May 22, 2019 - Kokkedal (Denmark)**

In the framework of a multi-day Danish networking, the first project we visited aimed to coordinate the management of the Usserød Stream, with the collaboration of the municipalities involved in the stream’s watershed. In Denmark, municipalities are larger administrative units with significant economic autonomy, for example, the site we visited, we were welcomed by a local government uniting more settlements with more than 40.000 residents. According to the project manager the three municipalities concerned (Fredensborg – Horsholm – Rudersdal) have recognized that they can only manage the 8 km stream together to the satisfaction of the population, which is why cooperation on catchment level has been built within the LIFE project. In addition to municipalities, the three local private water utility companies are also involved in the work, as both sewage and rainwater are discharged into the stream. The project was thus implemented within the framework of cooperation between municipalities and waterworks (between 03.09.2012. and 29.02.2016).

The project manager sincerely said that they had to deal with the difficulties of rivalry and mistrust at the beginning, until they learned how important a common interest is and how they can work together effectively. Small thematic groups (a separate working group for each action, in which each partner delegated professionals), workshops, brainstorming meetings were set up, where ideas were shared and the actors examined together the possible answers to the questions arose. In the spirit of the partnership, such discussions were held at all partners. During the project, they learned how important teamwork is, and that well-coordinated joint work will advance the success of the project.

From the coordination’s point of view, it can be an advantage that local stakeholders are able to represent their own interests more effectively and more credibly with detailed knowledge of the settlement’s problems, needs, opportunities and threats. Our host project manager explained and presented what solutions were found and applied successfully at municipal level. Automated water level control structures and various municipal water management solutions have been introduced, which can be the means of treating heavy rains and flash floods. They measured and added function to the uninhabited deep areas in the settlement, which are now an integrated part of the cityscape and play a community role.





Within the framework of their LIFE project, the management of the Usserød stream has been designed and carried out in two ways. The primary objective is to provide the population with flood security for floods with a 100-year probability. Their secondary, but equally important, goal is to preserve and improve the natural state of the stream, the related lakes, the reservoirs and the periodically flooded meadows and wooded areas, providing important recreational opportunities. On the stream, the water course was modelled with a computer, which also helps to plan further interventions. Water levels are controlled by a system connected with automatic gauges and sluices. The data collected by the system is open to the public, accessible live on the internet. During the field trip, we learned several good examples of how to combine flood protection, community use and ecological improvement:

- 1) Sluices on a system of lakes and streams are operated according to the cycle of reproduction of native predatory fish;
- 2) Formerly regulated streambeds have been re-winded in several places;





- 3) Meadows on the outskirts of the inner area are maintained by grazing cattle. A short section of the path along the designated flooded meadows is deeper, so individual protection was applied there with the help of a sheet pile wall along the road.
- 4) The designated floodplains also promoted the establishment of natural plant communities (sedge areas, reeds, fresh meadow grasses) indoors;
- 5) The streambed in the built-up areas was not converted to trapezoidal cross-section, but to an asymmetrical form where one side is a wide, flat high-water bed, which is moved and the other side is a steeper shore where vegetation was not disturbed, allowing multi-level vegetation to develop, shadowing the water. On this side, a low embankment protects the houses, its maintenance is the responsibility of the residents.
- 6) The creek's shore and the low-lying areas, which have flood protection functions, are an integrated part of the municipal green space network and also serve the recreational needs of the community;
- 7) The combined collection of wastewater and rainwater has been redesigned to avoid water quality damage (emergency situation) during heavy rains.





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During the implementation of the project, special emphasis was put on the development of common principles and operating procedures for co-operation based on equality, and on the establishment of an operational organization after the completion of the project. The municipalities assigned a separate cost line for the maintenance and monitoring of the project. According to this, the maintenance costs are paid by the three municipalities, and the water utility companies provide the working time of their own experts. In the future, they intend to further strengthen public communication. The experiences of the cooperation are summarized in a Manual which can be downloaded from their website.

At the meeting, the LIFE-MICACC project was also presented by the coordinating beneficiary, the Ministry of Interior, and a partner municipality (Bátya) implementing one of the pilot projects also presented the prototype, the NWRM solution planned at the settlement.

During the project presentation it was inspiring to see how the relevant administrative units (Fredensborg – Horsholm – Rudersdal) successfully implemented a bottom-up initiative. There are also a number of good, practical examples that can be used to promote the results in the MICACC project, such as a small information box where the project information can be placed, or QR code information panels near the site of implementation. Overall, the Stream of Usserød project included several elements that could serve as inspiration for the work on the catchment level in the second half of the LIFE-MICACC project.

More about the Stream of Usserød project (in English):

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n\\_proj\\_id=4268&docType=pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=4268&docType=pdf)

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