

14 November 2017

Multi-million euro EU project to improve water quality in South of England

The Interreg France (Channel) England programme has today (14 November 2017) announced that the University of Chichester will lead a new €4 million European project which will significantly improve the water quality in a number of rivers and lakes in the South of England and the North of France.

Currently only 30-40% of waters entering the English Channel are classified as 'Good Ecological Status' which is largely due to the high level of nitrates and phosphates in the water as a result of intensive farming.⁴

The cross-border project, known as CPES (Channel Payment for Ecosystem Services), will aim to reduce nutrient levels by implementing six pilot PES (Payment for Ecosystem Services) schemes across the Channel area².

PES schemes work by offering financial incentives to farmers and land managers to encourage them to implement more environmentally friendly methods of farming, such as ploughing orientation, targeted use of fertilisers and planting trees, which help significantly reduce the levels of run-off and nutrients in the water system. The incentives are funded through the establishment of a market with downstream users who benefit from cleaner water supplies, for example water companies and tourism businesses.

The PES schemes implemented by the project will promote a number of improvements in land management practices by reducing the costs and risks associated with earlier PES schemes.

The six pilot areas will include the Rother River in the South Downs and the Lac au Duc in Brittany, and will target 90 farms and land managers, as well as 18 water quality companies.

Project CPES will encourage the wider implementation of these type of PES schemes by using the six pilot sites to develop a resources toolkit which will then be made available to other water companies and land managers in new locations. This toolkit will act as a template that can then be used to replicate other commercially sustainable PES schemes across the country.

The PES schemes designed by the project will offer a more cost effective method of improving water quality which currently involves water companies managing nutrient levels in drinking water by blending high and low nitrate water sources.

Commenting on the announcement, Professor Dave Cooper from the University of Chichester said: *"We are delighted to have secured this European funding. The CPES project offers an exciting opportunity to work with partners from both the UK and France to find a sustainable and effective way*

of improving the quality of the water entering the English Channel and reducing the costs of treating drinking water."

The cross-border project between France and the UK will total 4 million euros with 69% funded by the Interreg France (Channel) England programme, representing a European Regional Development Fund budget of 2.8 million Euros. A total of 11 organisations from France and the UK will be involved in the project which will last three-and-a-half years.

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For further information, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

1. The Interreg FCE Programme is a European Territorial Cooperation programme that aims to fund high quality cooperation projects in the Channel border region between France and England. It focuses on a range of specific objectives including supporting innovation, improving the attractiveness of the FCE area and developing low carbon technologies. The Programme has a total of €223 million of ERDF funds to distribute by 2023 and is managed by Managing Authority Norfolk County Council.
2. The Programme operates within a clearly defined eligible area, covering the South and East Coasts of England from Cornwall to Norfolk, and the North Coast of France from Finistère to Pas-de-Calais. The programme area can be found [here](#).
3. Project Partners:
 - *Lead Partner: University of Chichester* (UK)
 - Syndicat Mixte du Grand Bassin de l'Oust (France)
 - South Downs National Park Authority (UK)
 - Portsmouth Water (UK)
 - Westcountry Rivers Trust (UK)
 - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France)
 - Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (France)
 - University of Rennes I (France)
 - Southern Water Services (UK)
 - Environment Agency (UK)
 - Sara Hernandez Consulting (France)
4. River Basin Management Plans 2015, DEFRA
5. More information about the Programme can be found here: <https://interreg5a-fce.eu/>