

Continuing to act together

The European programme Life Eden finished on 15th July 2005. It allowed for 4 years of reflection and joint action on issues of conservation of a fragile natural environment and its compatibility with the economic development, of mobilising the participants in the field and also significant budgets in order to achieve good results. Success for the three programme pilots : The regional Nature Park of La Narbonnaise en Méditerranée (PNR), the Narbonne - Lézignan Corbières - Port la Nouvelle Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and the Chambre d'Agriculture (Chamber of Agriculture) of Aude (CA)

EDEN, What is it ?

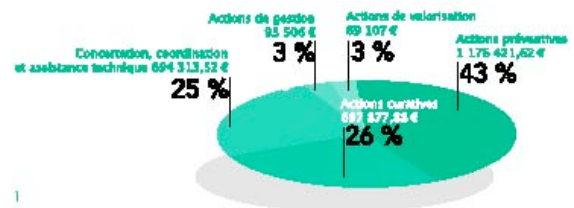
Eden (Concerted eco-development around the Narbonnais lagoons) is part of the European programme Life Environment for the integrated development of coastal areas, applied in the case of Mediterranean lagoons.

This programme of actions falls within the hydrographical limits of the catchment area of the Narbonnais lagoons. This coherent and natural intervention sector represents a characteristic of Life Eden.

Led and coordinated by the joint forces of the Regional Nature Park in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Narbonne and the Chamber of Agriculture of Aude, this programme is organised in two large sections : development of an integrated management: "Uses / Environments", and implementation of demonstrative actions.



In figures, Eden represents a budget of more than 2,7 million euros, 39% of which financed by Europe. The aid of the EU had, therefore the desired effect.



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Fig 1
The allocations within the Eden budget shows that priority was given to actions favouring prevention, which is at the very heart of an environmental approach.

43 actions have been started, and most of them brought to successful conclusion, on the whole of the Narbonnais lagoons catchment area. Taking into account the totality of the territory allowed the advancement of the perception of the necessary links of solidarity between all users of this geographical entity.

With inter-dependence in mind

This approach was meant to be cross-disciplinary, associating those structures that are used most in terms of profession or branch of industry. Several working groups were set up.

The one on the Robine canal aimed to define the best way to manage the trophic inflow (urban, industrial and agricultural) of the canal towards the lagoon. This issue had been identified before obtaining Life Eden, the programme extended it. The commission « Eau et milieux lagunaires » - Water and Lagoon environments - has within its remit to monitor the evolution of water quality in the lake and to put forward the management and development approaches that favour the rehabilitation of this environment. This body has now been transformed into a Lagoons Committee and obtained a Lagoons contract on 1st April 2005. This is one of the strong points of the Eden approach (see page 2).

The group « Gestion environnementale des établissements touristiques » - Environmental management of tourist facilities - aimed to implement the European charter for sustainable tourism in Protected Areas.

The agricultural committee has finally reflected on intervention programmes in favour of sustainable farming. Although its main thrust is not cross-disciplinary, it attracted the co-operation of professionals in the field, of local groups, of industry representatives and associations.

The pilot project committee

Another aspect of the transversality of the approach : the process of identifying and selecting actions. The pilot project committee made up of all the participants of the territory has evaluated projects that had been submitted using the prior advice of the technicians of the three pilot structures of the programme (PNR, CCI and CA). In fact, these have played a key role in the whole of the programme leading various activities, setting-up projects and generally helping to propose and shape projects.

Pursuing decartmentalisation

Transversality played a full role in this first circle but this prior preparation provoked among the committee participants certain criticisms, as mentioned by some : they felt that the actions could have been the object of more debate. However, without this basic work these actions would have taken longer to become reality. Among the criticisms that were made regarding the running of the programme, the lack of projects or their slow implementation was raised. It is obvious, there must be a balance between effectiveness and collective awareness. This can only be achieved long term. A common work practice has been born, has triggered meetings, enriched the questioning and allowed the approval and the achievement of nearly 43 projects (see FIG1 and pages 2 to 6). The

different users of the territory were able to grasp the approaches of the others.

The contract for the Narbonnais lagoons

A contract of lagoons (or environment contract) has been developed on the perimeter of the Narbonnais lagoons and their catchment area, for a five-year period (2005-2009).

The actions to be carried out, developed by a work group and refined through consultation with the Water and Lagoon Environments commission within the Life Eden programme, have five objectives :

- improve water quality and lagoon environments
- improve the hydraulic functioning of lagoons
- restore and manage peripheral marshes
- maintain artisanal lagoon fishing
- control the visiting of water sites and peripheral zones

The estimated cost of the programme is more than 30 million euros. Given the importance of the issues linked to water quality (eutrophication and chemical contamination), nearly 90% of the contract amount is earmarked for fighting pollution caused by domestic, industrial and farming waste.

The Lagoons Committee who will monitor the implementation of the contract, is composed of representatives of the State, of concerned local communities (from Regional to village levels) , consular chambers, local fishing committees, the seashore preservation body and the PNR.

Territory development and management

For nearly 4 years, Eden was a stimulus that spurred the accomplishment of several projects. Certain projects started earlier but because of its consultation approach, they were successful.

■ SOME ACHIEVEMENTS...

OPERATION CLEAN PORT(1)

The port concession, managed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Narbonne, is situated at the interface between two fragile habitats, the lagoon of Bages-Sigean and the Mediterranean. The diagnostic "water and waste" scheme enabled the concessionaire to establish a plan of action including the creation of a waste regrouping centre and continuation of the modernisation work for the rain water drainage.
In charge of project : CCI.

REGROUPING OF THE ASA (1)

The need to regroup the Authorised Syndicates Associations (ASA), in charge of the agricultural management of water, to give an impetus through common action over the whole of the catchment area, is obvious to everybody but the multiplication of structures delayed the process. Today, the association exists and must be focused on a real project.
In charge of project : Chamber of Agriculture and ASA.

DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT SALINA OF PEYRIAC (1)

A programme of works through ecologic civil engineering in a saline environment has been commissioned in order to improve hydraulic management, to make it more bird-friendly and to improve the natural beauty of the site, maintaining at the same time an opportunity for tourism and serving as a basis for reflection on how to manage and develop adjoining sites.

Project leaders : The Commune of Peyriac, PNR, CA, The « Conservatoire du littoral » – seashore conservation body.

MONITORING THE WASTE FROM WATER PURIFICATION STATIONS

This action is part of a preparation of a contract for the lakes of the Narbonnais; it contributed equally to the creation of the lagoon observatory.

Project leader : PNR.

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE LABRADOR LAGOON

- To determine the conservation and restoration issues concerning the heritage value of the Cercle and Labrador lagoon, a site of 950 ha connected to the network of humid peripheral zones of the Narbonnais lagoons.

- To allow the development of farming activities and the controlled access of visitors.

These two objectives are part of a sustainable development perspective. The obtained results will serve as a reflexion basis for the management and development of adjoining sites.

Project leaders : « Conservatoire du littoral », The League for the Protection of Birds (LPO), The Committee for the Agricultural Development of the Narbonnais.

MANAGEMENT OF THE BEACH AT COUSSOULES

Made up of an immense sandy lido, from the grau (canal) of the La Palme lagoon and a beach at the rear, partly made up of dunes, the site of Coussoules presents an important diversity of natural habitats. The length of the beach and the omni-presence of winds made this area a favourite spot for sail sports, leading to the illegal and destructive presence of engined vehicles. The Leucate Mayor's Office has recommended putting into place a management plan (parking areas, cycle and pedestrian lanes reconstitution of the dunes, full closing of the site to engined vehicles ...).

Project leader : commune of Leucate.

PHYSICO-CHEMICAL MONITORING OF THE IMPACT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES ON THE LAGOON HABITATS

To evaluate the results of the environmental efforts regarding the reduction of nuisances in the lagoon habitat.

This action had as its object the monitoring of human activity in the catchment area through the evaluation by simple measures of the water quality of the lakes.

Project leader : PNR, CPIE of the Narbonnais region.

■ ZOOM ON ...

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The Croix Sud industrial area is, like many such activity zones of this type in France, of mediocre environmental and aesthetic quality. These weak points render the area unattractive.

The objective of the action, piloted by the CCI, has been to suggest to the manager a plan of action to improve this situation and create an approach that will motivate the companies to participate fully in the project. The diagnosis has been partly carried out by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry services and partly by a consultancy. It revealed a number of issues in the water network that could trigger the presence of waste in the environment.

It recommends the bringing up to standard of facilities, the creation of dredging projects, of collective sedimentation tanks, a system for the prevention of accidental pollution, and an information campaign aimed at companies.

Furthermore, the « Communauté d'Agglomération de la Narbonnaise » (Narbonne and the surrounding communes) and the CCI will, before the end of the year, organise demonstrations and stimulating events for the local companies mainly in the fields of signposting and landscape restoration.

Project leaders : CCI et CAN

They said...

"The Life Eden programme, through the involvement of the farming world, reminded farmers that the environment must not be forgotten in their practices"
Louis Héraïl, member of the Chamber of Agriculture of Aude

"A very interesting programme which allowed various partners to meet and debate, and who finally changed their own practices to achieve a better quality for the Narbonnais lagoons"
Florence Verdier, Conservation of seashore and lagoon space

"Our association expressed itself and was listened to in the pilot project committee. The objective of protecting wetlands is shared by all. Thanks to a regular report, we were able to follow the progress of the programme. We also appreciated the educational aspect of Life-Eden"
Pierre Rayssac, president of the association of friends of La Franqui

(1) A special file for this action has been published, available on the Internet site of the Regional Natural Park of the Narbonnaise in the Mediterranean (www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr)

Pollution treatment

Water will certainly be the most disputed resource in the years to come. Protecting the resource, avoiding waste emphasises the need to find innovative solutions. This represents a challenge for the future for all the inhabitants of the region and that is why the Life Eden programme has a role to play. This will not be without difficulties as demonstrated by the three emphasised actions which show that much thought is needed, especially regarding the treatment and re-utilisation of effluent.

■ SOME ACHIEVEMENTS...

IMPLEMENTATION OF CLEAN TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NORGE LAUNDRY COMPANY(1)

The company of Montredon des Corbières, by adopting a new technology more economic in water and energy, demonstrated the possibility of linking economic performance to ecological concerns.

Project leader : Norge company

■ ZOOM ON ...

METHANATION OF VINEYARD EFFLUENT

The management of vineyard effluent raises numerous issues for the growers. Traditional techniques (settling tanks) generate a lot of slime and odours. These are the source of problems in the neighbourhood.

Methanation is "cleaner" but requires complex and costly equipment which is not adapted to the wine growing structures of the region.

The study, led by the INRA (National Institute of Agronomic research), concerns a rustic system of methanation reactor with floating cap. The conception of the digestion tank lends hope to the development of low-cost installations compared to existing digesters. The prototype has been produced and tested with the effluents of the Narbonne distilleries.

If the results merit further work, the action represents an interesting example of participation by the Life Eden programme in a research process linked to the needs of local companies.

Project leader : INRA

ENQUIRY INTO UNUSED PHYTOSANITARY PRODUCTS AND EMPTY WRAPPINGS (1)

The objective is to put in place an efficient collection system of unused products and empty wrappings and to sift through the usage practices in order to reduce the quantities.

The enquiry was carried out among farmers as well as other users including the SNCF (French railway company), the Mayor's Offices, and the Motorway network.

The enquiry is now finished and should lead to the drawing up of a collection calendar adapted to local use.

Project leader : Chambre d'Agriculture.

■ ZOOM ON ...

EPU MOBIL (1)

The waste from phytosanitary products used in agriculture is responsible for significant environmental damage. Until recently, used water resulting from the cleaning of tanks had been neither collected nor treated. The Community of Communes Corbières in the Mediterranean decided to build secure filling areas and chose, together with the Chamber of Agriculture, a technique of treatment developed by a Swiss company. The machine, called EPU mobil, is designed to treat 4m³ of effluents per hour.

Mounted on a trailer, it can be moved from one filling area to another and, therefore, allows every commune to have its equipment; essential for ensuring that the farmers will use it.

The farmers share the cost of re-treating the cartridges of activated carbon. This project sparked interest from other communities who came looking for information.

Project leaders : Communauté de communes Corbières Méditerranée, Chambre d'Agriculture, Parc naturel régional de la Narbonnaise.

BUILDING A PURIFICATION STATION THROUGH ECOLOGICAL CIVIL ENGINEERING (1)

The commune of Feuilla has a purification station with a reed planted filter. The purification of used water is done through gravity without the need for a source of energy. The effluent goes through several filtering beds, the matters in suspension are degraded by the bacteria associated with roots and the ejected water conforms to European standards.

High purification performance, exceptional landscape integration, no odour or noise, very little sludge produced... so many advantages that impressed representatives, technicians and associations for the protection of the environment.

Project leader : commune of Feuilla.

■ ZOOM ON ...

USE OF WATER TREATED IN PURIFICATION STATIONS FOR WATERING

The watering of green spaces is a great water consumer, especially during summer. At present, drinking water is being used, which in terms of sustainable development and public finances does not make good sense. Waste water from the only purification station in the city of Narbonne represents 8000 to 9000m³ /day. The used water conforms to required standards and can be used to water between 66 and 75ha of green spaces. However, existing rules and regulations mean that the re-use of waste water by sprinkler irrigation cannot be carried out within 50m from any public thoroughfare or dwelling, which excludes most of the urban green spaces.

The action consisted of studying the feasibility technique, regulatory obstacles and possible examples in Europe. If, under existing French law, this re-use is not possible, the study can serve as a basis for a re-think on the relaxation of regulations at national level and the implementation of a pilot site at local level.

Project leader : Communauté d'Agglomération de la Narbonnaise.

They said...

"The plan of action was certain and the facts presented are pertinent"

Laurent Triadou, in charge of the SAGE mission at the Inter-departmental Association of the Basses Plaines de l'Aude

"One regret: the programme Life Eden did not allow the promotion of organic agriculture and control of the use of phytosanitary products"

Pitch Bloch, President of the association ECCLA

"Life Eden stands first of all for supplementary actions of progress reinforcing the other programmes heavily engaged in the field of sanitation and purification. Thanks to Life Eden, the Lagoons contract now contains a strong « industrial component »"

Ivan Barthelemy, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Narbonne-Lézignan-Corbières Port La Nouvelle

"This approach is part of the policy of sustainable development of the city of Narbonne and the Narbonnais area. We have also learned how to set up a programme financed by European funds earmarked for the environment"

Ange Mandelli, Deputy Mayor of Narbonne in charge of transport, circulation and intercommunal affairs. Vice-President of CAN, in charge of environment

Awareness, enrichment

The actions on this theme have been numerous. They are mainly aimed at increasing the awareness of teachers and those working in tourism and, through them, increasing awareness among the young and the public at large. Among these actions, we have picked out two (operation "live beaches" and the discovery footpaths of Bages and Moussan) which are notable for their demonstrative value and their ability to be reproduced.

■ SOME ACHIEVEMENTS...

GUIDE TO NATURE AND HERITAGE ACTIVITIES

Published in 10 000 copies, the guide suggests educational activities, mainly for the out-of-season period. It contributes to the programme of the tourist season and improvement of the out-of-season tourist flow by offering organised activities.

Project leader : PNR

EDUCATIONAL TRAINING "WATER AND LAGOON HABITAT"

6 training half-days with around twenty teachers from the schools in the area and ending with a forum uniting group leaders, teachers and professionals from various sectors of activity in the catchment area.

Project leader : PNR

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS WATER AND LAGOON HABITAT (1)

Carried out with the help of National Education and the "Ecole du Parc" network of group leaders, including the Pierre Brossolette primary school and

the JAV Service in Narbonne as well as the "Trait d'Union" association, reaching over 200 children.

Project leaders : « Pierre Brossolette » school, JAV and « Trait d'Union ».

METHODOLOGY GUIDE ON EDUCATION OF THE TERRITORY

A simple and fun approach, practical information, to promote environmental awareness, the result of a lengthy consultation, this guide was published in October 2004 and received a favourable reception from the educational establishment.

Project leader : PNR

IDENTI'TERRES FESTIVAL

Within the framework of a pluridisciplinary festival (theatre, music, arts, conferences...) the 2004 edition aimed to increase public awareness on the theme of water and the importance of the lagoon habitat.

Project leader : PNR

RAISING AWARENESS ON CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A fun document to raise the awareness of holiday makers on what they can do to help their hosts' efforts to reduce the impact of tourism on the ecosystem. A series of cartoons encourages water and energy saving, respect for the environment, sorting waste, all explained in three languages. The poster is signed by the campsites, the gîtes and chambres d'hôtes "Nature et patrimoine"- Nature and Heritage

Project leaders: PNR, GHPA, Gîtes ruraux.

■ ZOOM ON ... DISCOVERY FOOTPATHS

Two discovery footpaths with explanations have been created in the villages of Bages and Moussan : the first situated by the lagoon, the second higher in the catchments area. In line with the need to control tourism in a fragile natural habitat the simultaneous creation of these two footpaths responds to the aim of trying to raise public awareness of concepts such as the inter-relation of different spaces within a water catchments area.

The viewing point above Moussan allows the visualisation of a part of the hydrographic network as well as the inception of the la Robine canal with the help of lecture and orientation plans.

The circuit at Bages starts at the top of the village and reaches the fishing port. It helps us to understand the urban evolution of the village, its relation to the lagoon and its riches as well as the influence of the catchment area on the lagoon activities.

Project leader : communes of Bages and Moussan, PNR.

DISCOVERY WALKS

The exhibition on the protected natural space of the region aims to raise public awareness of the characteristics of the territory and the activities linked to it. Different means of discovery were used such as : debates, books, artistic creations, activities – explanations around the lagoons.

Project leader : PNR

ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The municipality of Bages welcomes classes from the region within its new school to discover the habitat of the lagoons. A programme proposed by the "Ecole du Parc" group has been sent to the educational establishments of the area. Since February 2004, 29 classes have been welcomed, that is 700 children with increased awareness of the lagoon habitat.

Project leaders : commune of Bages, PNR

ENVIRONMENT RESOURCE CENTRE

Integrated to the resource centre of the natural Park, it reflects a theme specifically linked with the Mediterranean lagoons, with wetlands and with the activities that have an impact on them.

Project leader : PNR

ACCOMMODATION CATALOGUE (1)

Several gîtes, chambres d'hôtes and campsites are committed to an environmental approach. A catalogue explaining their approach will guide visitors to these hosts.

Project leaders : PNR, GHPA, Gîtes ruraux, CCI.

DIVERSIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL FISHING ACTIVITY

The decline of this activity, a strong element in the lagoon heritage, can be compensated for by a diversification based on know-how and knowledge of the habitat. The action involves supporting the necessary investment to organise the discovery walks of the lake and the fishing sector.

Project leader : Gérard Barboteau, professional fisherman

■ ZOOM ON ... OPERATION "LIVE BEACHES" (1)

The sea shores harbour many species of birds but also, during summer, a large tourist population. It is a typical case of the necessity to balance the needs of the "users". 25% of the Mediterranean population of little terns occupy these sandy strips during the reproduction period.

The Bird Protection League has put into practice protection operations in certain villages in cooperation with the seashore conservation body but experience has shown that in order to succeed, the whole of the seashore has to be taken into account. The "Live Beaches" project aimed to localise the bird colonies, to ensure their protection and to raise the awareness of the authorities and their technical services and of the holiday makers and local people. A brochure explaining this approach has been distributed and protection perimeters established. The largest colony of little terns was therefore able to establish itself, to reproduce and everybody was able to discover the natural richness of this territory.

Project leader : Ligue de protection des oiseaux, PNR.

THE MARITIME COOPERATIVE OF SMALL LAGOONS FISHING INDUSTRIES

The marketing and development of fishing products has not been the aim of any organisation. The study must lead to the creation of a maritime cooperative-type structure centred on the marketing of the species specific to the lagoon, the branding of the eel, eco-tourism and acquiring equipment for communal use. The accidental pollution that has affected the lagoon recently has temporarily put a question mark under

the significant progress that had been registered until that moment..

Project leader : prud'homie de Port la Nouvelle,
Local fishing committee.

They said...

"A pertinent programme but too short in its time span (...). Without Life Eden, we could not have had the financial means to protect the terns in the operation "Live Beaches"

Henri Pierre Roche, regional delegate of the Bird Protection League

"The partnership put into place within the framework of the Life Eden programme, between the socio-economic partners and the inter-communalities, will favour the networking of the major players in the territory"
Mikaël Chabanol, Association for the Promotion of the Narbonnais country

"The Life Eden programme managed to create a local dynamism around a shared objective"
Daniel Crépin, DIREN Languedoc-Roussillon

Final evaluation of the Eco Development approach in consultation with Life EDEN : What achievements? What limits ?

If it is not understood as a global approach, the development of the territory, in its different urban, industrial or tourist parts, could trigger conflicts regarding use and an irreversible degradation of the natural habitats and of their ecological value and finally a degradation of their economic value. Faced with an increased pressure due to activities in a limited space, the sector approach is not sufficient when any particular rule or public policy only take into consideration the objectives of just one "player", ignoring the cross impacts on the other sectors of activity.

The « eco-development » proposes a new vision of interdependence between the environment and demographic and economic growth. The eco-development approach involves a mobilisation and consultation amongst players, first in order to define a pertinent intervention perimeter, then to measure the environmental, social and economic issues linked to this and finally to define the planning of the objectives and actions to be put into practice.

The **Life EDEN** programme (**Eco-Development around the Lagoons of the Narbonnais**) represents an exemplary approach carried out successfully. Based on a lengthy consultation, it allowed the networking of communities, of the industrial and farming world in order to come together over a common objective – the protection of the lagoons of the Narbonnais – and to find solutions so that every « contributor » reduces its pollution. The EDEN approach, with technical support for the economic development agents and those involved in the development of the territory became a programme of financial aid translated into 60 measures regrouped around four axes of intervention: preventive actions, curative actions, development actions and management actions.

Happy with this success, the promoters of the Life Eden programme, the owner beneficiaries of the actions and all the concerned players wished to share their experience with the managers of space and other players in the field of territory management and economic development

committing themselves to a concerted eco-developmental approach.

A final evaluation has therefore been achieved in order to learn the lessons of this approach and communicate them through a Life EDEN Methodological Guide¹. This Guide has been developed starting from an independent external technical audit and a final Forum Life EDEN organised 11 May 2005 by reuniting all the players involved in economic development and the management of the territory.

Fundamentally, this evaluation gave an answer to a series of questions relating to this approach, the implementation and the effects of the Life EDEN programme. The evaluation tried to appreciate in what measure Life EDEN has the main qualities that ideally characterise a "good" approach. The answers given are in relation to a framework currently adopted for the evaluation of public policies and using the following criteria: **coherence, pertinence, expectation, objectives, efficiency, reproducibility and sustainability.**

A coherent programme

The coherence of the programme proved itself through :

- the common and shared objective, that of protecting and managing the lagoons of the Narbonnais,
- in the choice of the space for intervention : acting at the level of the Narbonnais lagoons catchment area was a good response to the solidarity among the activities upstream and downstream to achieve a concerted development for the Narbonnais lagoons,
- the cooperation between players: the most exemplary in this programme was « local democracy achieved in a space of solidarity »..

¹ This Guide is available on the Internet site of the Regional National Park of the Narbonnais on the Mediterranean (www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr)

A pertinent programme

The programme of actions answers well the objectives of fighting pollution at the scale of the catchment area through preventive actions, curative actions and actions for development and management. These actions had been selected, than validated by the pilot committee of Life EDEN, composed by all the players in the territory, facts which guaranteed the pertinence of the actions vis-à-vis the main objective.

But...

we have to reflect on the extension of actions towards more elaborate programmes concerning the main objective, for instance in the farming field.

Moreover, the relatively short duration of the programme of actions does not yet allow us to measure the impacts of certain actions on the environment.

A programme that achieved its objectives

Concerning innovative actions ; the first objectives of Life EDEN were not to observe a direct improvement of the environment – although this is the final objective -, but to spur the testing of new technologies and methodologies relevant to the eco-development of the territory, which has been achieved successfully. Among the actions carried out, some had an immediate impact on the environment (like those concerning the reduction in the flow of pollutants). The environment efficiency of other actions will only be measurable through a dedicated follow-up.

But...

Obviously, the programme Life has not managed to solve all the pollution issues. Certain actions did not have the desired result or are still insufficient to master certain impacts. Other actions are to be pursued and other measures in Life EDEN were not successful because they were not relayed on the local plan.

An effective programme

Life EDEN served as an action lever :

- by bringing a strong technical and financial support of 2.7M euros which allowed the implementation of numerous actions that had been dormant until that moment.
- by favouring the mobilisation of bodies and collective groups as co-financers
- by uniting the players of the territory in a permanent process of consultation,
- by favouring the emergence, the achievement and follow-up of projects thanks to the joining of technical, financial and administrative competences in the same « operational unit ».

But...

Certain projects could have seen the light of day without the programme Life EDEN. At the same time it is probable that these projects have been accelerated by the "branding" or the image carried by Life rather than the grant attached to it. There is also room for improvement in increasing the human means for the implementation or follow-up of actions in the field of projects, re-appraising the minimum rate of grants for small beneficiaries and expanding consultation.

An efficient programme

The results of most of the actions cannot be solely evaluated by the amounts spent, which are reasonable within the framework of the programme. The environmental benefits created by these actions, which cannot be quantified in monetary terms, are part of the efficiency of these actions.

A reproducible programme

Life EDEN has generated unique « products » « good » projects, that can be reproduced on condition that they spread at regional, national and international level. The transferability of this approach at international level could not be carried out within the framework of Interreg 3, but more advanced exchanges have been established with an Italian region (Grosseto), to study the transferability methods for the Life EDEN approach.

A sustainable programme

The programme Life EDEN is part of an initiative to manage a common heritage – the lakes of the Narbonnais and their catchment area -, within the plan of objectives pursued by the programme, activity procedures and application of management decisions.

Within the activity framework of the Life EDEN programme, as within the operational implementation of the 43 "projects of sustainable development " that benefited from its financing, the association of the great players of the territory, at the intersection of eco-developmental preoccupations, represents a point that is both as original and positive as the approach itself.

Likewise, the permanent search for integrating points of view, in order to aid decision-making, during the meetings of the pilot committee is part of the approach within the integrated management of the coastal areas, as in the perspective of a sustainable development of the territories in question.

Moreover, the recent signing of a Lagoon contract will ensure the continuation, both institutional and operational, of the Life Eden programme.

Conclusions :

In the light of the lessons learned through « Life EDEN », the « good » questions to ask in relation to putting into place a territorial approach of Eco Development can finally be the following:.

Preparation

- Is the approach initiated on the basis of common shared objectives?
- Does it rest on the pooling together of means and knowledge?
- What consultation method is put into place in order to “bring together the players” of the territory?
- Is the action programme conceived on the scale of a homogenous territory (the catchment area, for instance)?
- Is the approach eco-systemic (understanding the relation between the upstream and downstream catchment area) and socio-systemic (playing on the necessary solidarity between users)?
- does the programme fit in the time span, for instance the time span necessary to obtain a « good ecological state” within the framework of quality objectives set up for the habitats to be protected?

The selection of actions

- Does the programme of actions respond to the eligibility criteria of the eco-development programme in question?
- Does an arbitrage of the prior choice of actions and a debate in the pilot committee allow for transparency of the decisions taken ?

The technical and financial finalisation of the actions

- Will the supporting structure of the programme bring to the project users technical support during the initiation of the actions ?
- Are the financers associated with the approach from the beginning?
- Is the financing of the actions sufficiently stimulating ?

The operational implementation

- During the programme, does the supporting structure supply a satisfactory technical support to the project beneficiaries?
- Do the project beneficiaries demonstrate a strong motivation ?

Communication

- At the beginning of the approach, does the communication explain properly the approach and does it emphasise the « pluses » that it can bring about ?
- Is the communication with the project beneficiaries effective?

- Is the information sufficiently relayed in the different spheres of influence of the project beneficiary (the farming, industrial, world; the associations...)?
- Is the public at large sufficiently informed?
- Are the actions developed through communication?

The follow-up

- Do the indicators put into place enable the evolution of the actions to be measured ? Do they give brief and comprehensive information directly linked to the objectives of the field players ?
- Do they translate the effects and results of the proper implementation of the actions?
- Do the political bodies have access to data reflecting in a qualified manner the state of advancement of the environmental policy in their territory ?

Evaluation

- Are the different objectives of the approach coherent among themselves?
- Is the plan of action pertinent and the actions adapted to the nature of the problems it claims to solve?
- In what measure are the changes noted in the state of the environment in accordance with the objectives of the approach?
- Are the financial resources mobilised in the approach well used?

Transferability

- Is the eco-development joined-up approach transferable and reproducible? If so, in what ways could it be made known?

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

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