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LIFE 99 Controlling non-point pollution in 6 European countries

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The effectiveness of policies for the prevention and control of point and non-point pollution had to be checked in the European Union's countries.

Through its Life 99 Programme, the European Commission accepted a proposal for a study aiming at making an inventory of the different measures and incentives taken in 6 member States to control this kind of pollution : Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and France.

The study consisted of an inventory, analysis and comparison of the policies implemented for preventing, reducing and controlling point and non-point pollution and the formulation of recommendations applicable to all European States.

It dealt with part of the national territory of each country made up of representative river basins : the Meuse river basin which concerns four partner countries and four other river basins in Great Britain, Germany, Sweden and France.

The project, amounting to 600,000 Euros, lasted 18 months and was led by the International Office for Water (France) in collaboration with F&N UMWELT (Germany), the Walloon Ministry of the Environment (Belgium), RIZA (the Netherlands), the Water Research Centre (United Kingdom) and IVL (Sweden) and with the support of the French Water Agencies.

Work started in November 1999 and allowed the drawing-up of 10 methodological guides for each type of polluting activity to precisely define the research to be carried out and the methods to be used for analysing and evaluating the policies implemented in the six countries.

The survey results and bibliographic analyses allowed the drawing-up of the first national and topical summary reports which were then discussed in November 2000 during a seminar in which specialists and political officials concerned with this topic participated.

Conclusions and converging institutional and technical measures, whose effectiveness is proven to prevent point and non-point pollution, will be presented to the national authorities and public institutions of the six countries and to the European Commission in a second phase to assess the feasibility of their implementation in the field.

The completion report and communication products of this study were disseminated in May 2001.