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Ecological engineering applied to water : Natural Water Retention Measures - "NWRM"

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Ecological engineering is becoming a key area for action and a green infrastructure policy is gradually taking up in the water sector.

The increased use of such techniques is justified more and more by the recent progress they have made : we know today how to design green roofs, infiltration trenches and ponds that fit perfectly into the urban landscape, floodplains that protect cities, grass strips that limit erosion, etc.

However, the multiplicity of people using these techniques, the variety of possible actions and associated joint benefits as well as services provided to the environment, make it now very difficult to aggregate and capitalize the acquired knowledge.

In 2013, the DG Environment launched an invitation to tender for structuring knowledge to enable the use of these techniques.

Commonly known by the name of ecological engineering, these measures are gathered under the name of "Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM)".

IOWater, coordinator of this project, developed, with 10 other European partners, a platform (www.nwrm.eu) whose catalogue currently includes 53 measures, regrouped into four sectors : Forestry, Urban area, Agriculture and Nature / Hydromorphology.

Case studies are also presented and a database is accessible via the platform.

To facilitate access to information for water managers and decision makers, a practical guide has been developed and translated into the 25 languages of the European Union.

The project results were presented in the fall of 2014 to the various WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) working groups, but also at the EUROPE-INBO 2014 General Assembly and at the Conference on Water in Mountain in Megeve.