



## ***The Open Rivers Programme is launched today to support dam removal projects and restore thousands of km of rivers across Europe...***

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The **Open Rivers Programme** is excited to officially launch today, thanks to a €42.5 million grant over six years from [Arcadia](#), a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.

### **Why?**

European rivers are the most fragmented in the world which has led to the loss of many species and habitats. One of the biggest causes of river fragmentation is the presence of man-made barriers to river flow.

Dam removal is a relatively cost effective and quick solution to restoring river continuity. This in turn can improve water quality, restore the diversity and abundance of life in rivers and their surrounding habitats and increase habitat connectivity and resilience.

### **How?**

With over one a million barriers in European rivers, there is a need to prioritise those that are removed. The programme's focus will be to support organisations and communities working to restore rivers by funding dam removal projects that have the greatest possible impact on restoring river ecosystems.

The **Open Rivers Programme** will offer grants to support:

1. **The removal of small dams (up to 2 metres in height)** in rivers.
2. **Preparatory work** that will result in a dam removal.
3. The **dam removal movement** in Europe, so that dam removal becomes more widely accepted and implemented in order to restore more river across Europe.

The programme will offer its first grants in February 2022 by supporting a selection of "ready to go" dam removal projects that have been identified during its preparatory phase. It will also release a new call for Expressions of Interest on **12th November 2021**, with projects due to start from May 2022.

A full launch of the programme and press release will take place in spring 2022 around the time of the first grant awards..

Be the first to receive important news from the programme by signing up to [news updates](#).

You can also read more on our website – [www.openrivers.eu](http://www.openrivers.eu)

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### **About the Open Rivers Programme**

The mission of the ***Open Rivers Programme*** is to restore endangered European rivers by supporting interventions that lead to the removal of dams and the restoration of river flow and biodiversity.

Its vision is for free-flowing rivers with healthy, diverse and connected ecosystems across Europe, which are enjoyed, valued, and protected by the communities that depend on them.

The programme is managed by Stichting European Open Rivers Programme, a charitable foundation, registered in the Netherlands.

A Programme Advisory Group supports the programme to ensure its strategy is aligned with other similar initiatives dedicated to river restoration in Europe. Members include:

- Dam Removal Europe
- European Centre for River Restoration
- European Environment Agency
- Global Water Partnership
- International Union for Conservation of Nature
- Swansea University

### **About Arcadia ([www.arcadiahfund.org.uk](http://www.arcadiahfund.org.uk))**

‘Arcadia is a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. It supports charities and scholarly institutions that preserve cultural heritage and the environment. Arcadia also supports projects that promote open access, and all of its awards are granted on the condition that any materials produced are made available for free online. Since 2002, Arcadia has awarded more than \$910 million to projects around the world.’

### **For further information, please contact:**

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