# River Orbigo Restoration Project







IRF EUROPEAN RIVERPRIZE FINALIST September 2013, Vienna, Austria

## DUERO BASIN AUTHORITY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT



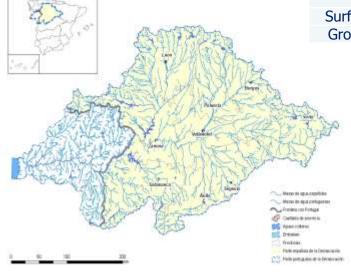




## Some data about Duero Basin



	Spanish part		Portuguese part		Total
	Units	%	Units	%	Units
Area (km²)	78,859	80.4	19,214	19.6	98,073
Population (inhab)	2,210,541	52.9	1,966,483	47.1	4,177,024
Run-off (hm³/year)	13,500	62.8	8,000	37.2	21,500
Average rainfall (I/m <sup>2</sup> )	618	37.5	1,030	62.5	1,648
Reservoirs (hm³/number)	7,874/67	87.9	1,080/39	12.1	8,954/10 6
Gross demand (hm³/year)	4,680	84.8	837	15.2	5,517
Irrigation (ha)	551,197	73.3	200,723	26.7	751,920
Average gross duty (m³/ha/year)	7,936		3,700		6,825
Cultivated land (ha)	4,172,681	85.1	729,923	14.9	4,902,604
Natura 2000 network area (ha)	1,723,412	73.9	609,852	26.1	2,333,264
Surface water bodies	710	65.0	383	35.0	1,093
Groundwater bodies	64	95.5	3	4.5	67



MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, ALIMENTACIÓN Y MEDIO AMBIENTE CONFEDERACION HIDROGRAFICA DEL DUBRO



## Legislative and institutional framework

#### WFD + FRD

#### **NATIONAL LEGISLATION**

#### MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

## SPANISH NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RIVER RESTORATION (NSRR)

- Goal and basic principles
- Objectives
- Priorities for action
- Definition of lines of work
- Selection and financing of major projects

#### **DUERO BASIN AUTHORITY**

**BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN** 

PROGRAMME OF MEASURES

Management of major restoration projects (NSRR)

Conservartion and enhancement plans

River Órbigo Restoration Project



Some data about River Órbigo:

• Basin surface: 4,990 km<sup>2</sup>

•Length: 108 km, part in Nature Network

Altitude range: 1,584 mRegime: rainfall-snowfall

Average discharge under the natural

regime: 40 m<sup>3</sup>/s

•Peak discharge registered: 600 m<sup>3</sup>/s

•Original geomorphology: braided

(wandering) and meandering

**Cost:** 2.200.000€ funded by the Ministry (less than the initial budget)

**Management:** Duero Basin Authority

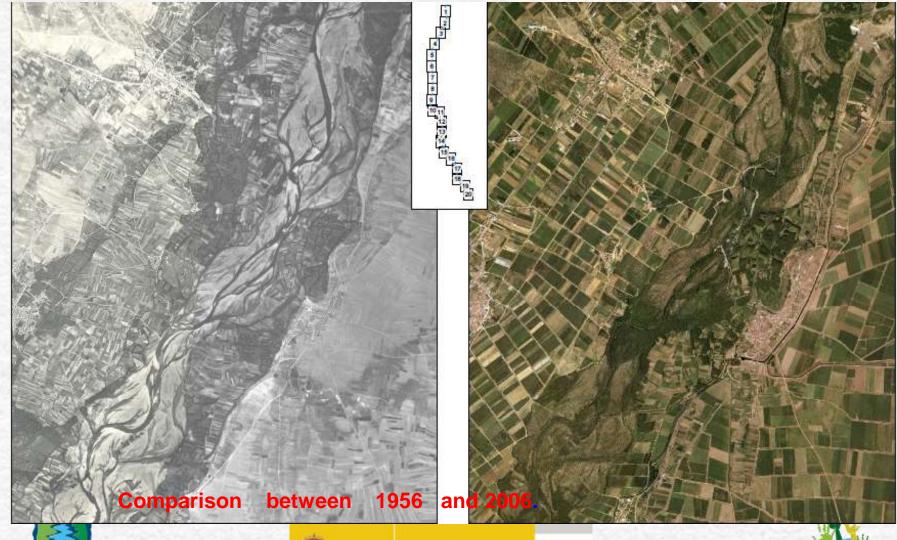
Time: 2008-2013 (some monitoring

task still ongoing)





## **River Órbigo Restoration Project**





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## **River Orbigo Restoration**

**Project** 

#### **Previous situation**

- Enbankment and channelization
- Hydraulic malfunctioning
- Flood problems
- Urban planning and housing under risk conditions
- Impacts on aquatic ecosystems
- Expensive maintenance







## River Órbigo Restoration Project

#### **Specific objectives:**

- •Recovering morphology and hydraulic capacity of the former stream bed of the river and its connectivity with the floodplain and improving longitudinal continuity
- Achievements in doing so:
  - Increasing concentration times -> flood abatement -> flood risk attenuation (Floods Directive 2007/60/EC).
  - Improving ecological conditions of the riparian corridor and the diversity of habitats (Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC and 92/43/ECC Habitats Directive).







## River Órbigo Restoration Project: main action

## Works to improve lateral connectivity and dynamics by recovering natural floodplains:

- Elimination of rock armour: 4,720 m
- Elimination of earth embankments: 8,710 m
- Movement of earth embankments away from the channel: 5,220 m



### River Órbigo Restoration Project: other actions

#### -Works to improve longitudinal continuity:





Modification of a transversal obstacle to allow the passage of fauna and sediment



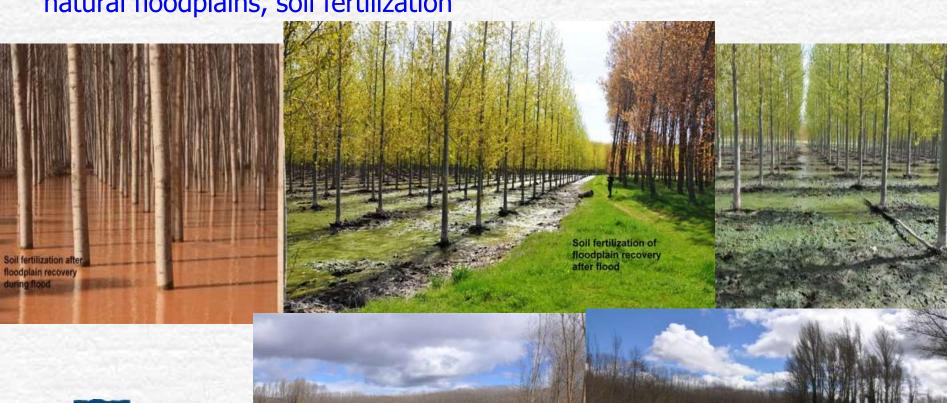
-Forest actions: Revegetation with riparian vegetation: 7.2 ha



### River Órbigo Restoration Project: achivements

-Recovery of 480 ha of flood prone areas with a high capacity to attenuate floods naturally

- Greater infiltration rate and rate of recharge of the alluvial natural floodplains, soil fertilization





### **River Órbigo Restoration Project: achivements**

- -Higher habitat diversity thanks to the increasing both longitudinal and lateral continuity and the recovering adjacent fluvial areas
- -Integration of the river in the urban setting so improvement of the landscape and strenthening of tourism opportunities
- Drastically reduced need for maintenance



## **River Órbigo Restoration Project: monitoring**

- Winter 2013 160 m<sup>3</sup> flood comparable to those in 1995 and 2000 causing serious damages flood abatement, no damages now.
- Social acceptance: No social alarm, neither reactions against, nor new actions requested.
- Monitoring topographic changes.
- Monitoring morphological changes: hydromorphological indicators

RECOVERING ROOM FROM THE RIVER PROVED TO PREVENT DAMAGES FROM FLOODS

CHANGE IN THE ECOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE WATER BODY







### **Public Participation Process**

#### Why was it needed?

- Recovering floodplain natural functioning implied losing some using possibilities: housing, farming, limitation to poplar plantation. Difficulties of expropriation / unfairness of the use of public money to do so.
- Project based on the principles of flood attenuation clashes with a mentality stemming from several decades of channelization and reduction of natural floodplain works

#### How was it carried out?

 More than 3 years and 50 meetings throughout all the project: project drafting, implementation and monitoring, with local authorities, stakeholders and population as a whole







## **Public Participation Process**















#### **Public Participation Process**

#### La eliminación de escolleras en el río enfrenta a los pueblos con la CHD

La confederación replantea las partes más polémicas del proyecto de mejora ecológica

Las obros de roelem del estado cero Magico del río Órbigo en ua primer Securejo hustu Sunta Murina del a que el proyecto de la Confederación Hidrográfica del Duero (CEED) elicciona o cetira las escolleras, una tun como si leu suprinsierse: las de firmanele sus poldaciones.

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The rip-rap removal puts riverine inhabitants face to face with River Basin Authority (CHD)

The news shows the reluctance of some towns about the project, fearing for his safety and that of their assets



El 'chip' mental para entender las obras de mejora ecológica del río

■Los trabajos para desencauzar el Órbigo recuperan el pasillo natural inundable

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natural que ocupaba

Medio Ambiente eligió el Órbigo como actuación preferente porque soporta una gran presión humana

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Change of mentality to understand the ecological improvement of the river

The dechannelization works recover the natural floodplain

News about the difficulties to get through to riparian communities the new concept of "room for the river", after years watching channelization works, and how eventually the new approach is understood.





### **Volunteering and environmental** education program

- Funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment
- Carried out by a NPO under the management and monitorig of DBA
- Goal: encourage active participation and raise awareness about river ecosystems

- Targeted to all kinds of people, particularly those not taking part in the public participation process (children, youth, families...)







#### **Volunteering and environmental** education program

#### MAIN LINES OF ACTION:

**Information and awareness** through training, interpretive tours, several educational activities (role play, water mural, drawing contests ...).

**Diagnosis and assessement** of the ecological status of the River (analysis of water quality, biological and hidromorphological parameters, identification pressures, local population surveys ...).

**Conservation and rehabilitation** of the river

ecosystem: waste disposal, treatment of vegetation, plantations, installation of

intepretive panels.







- A positive attitude towards the project promoted

- Involvement of the people: commitment and shared responsibility for the ecological status of the river

- More than 800 people took part DIARIO DE LA ESCUELA
- Lots of materials
- -Very significant impact on the media





children and adults in order to enhance the river and learn about its





## Dissemination and training: demonstration value of the project

- EL EJEMPLO DEL ÓRBIGO

  EL EJEMPLO DEL ÓRBIGO

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- Become a reference piece of work, visited by students, technicians and professionals
- Selected by several Universities to be studied in degrees and masters and by the Ministry for its training program
- Selected for the field visit of the First Iberian Congress on River Restoration

 Orbigo basin is one of the pilot basins in the River Restoration Community of Practice emerging from the last World Water Forum

Video shooting







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#### **Conclusions**

Good practice of integrated water management and land use policies: first great project using very novel concepts like room for the river, green infraestructure...

Importance of management and planning work

Example of integrated approach inWFD and FD implementation

Example of the relevance of social tools like public participation process, volunteering and environmental education program linked to the project

Impact on the media: a plan not only based in press releases

Importance of dissemination due to the ability of the project to be replicated in other rivers suffering the same problems

#### A LOT OF CHALLENGES OVERCOME AND LESSONS LEARNED!!!!







## **River Órbigo Restoration Project**









