



LIFE Project Number  
**LIFE19 NAT/SE/000333**

**Progress Report 2<sup>1</sup>**  
**Covering the project activities from 01/05/2024<sup>2</sup> to 31/01/2026**

Reporting Date<sup>3</sup>  
**31/01/2026**

LIFE PROJECT NAME or Acronym  
**Ecostreams for LIFE**

Data Project

<b>Project location:</b>	The counties of Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland
<b>Project start date:</b>	01/01/2021
<b>Project end date:</b>	31/12/2026 <b>Extension date:</b> 31/12/2027
<b>Total budget:</b>	17 038 931 €
<b>EU contribution:</b>	9 166 422 €
<b>(%) of eligible costs:</b>	54,91

Data Beneficiary

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<sup>1</sup> Progress Report without any payment request (for Progress Reports with payment request, use the Mid-term Report template)

<sup>2</sup> Project start date in the case of the first Progress Report, otherwise date since the last reporting period

<sup>3</sup> Include the reporting date as foreseen in Form C2 of Annex II of the Grant Agreement or as modified in agreement with the Agency

## **Section 1 - Overall assessment of the achievements and as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable (2 pages max)**

### **Give a specific yet concise summary of the overall progress achieved under all groups of actions;**

Overall, the project continues to progress towards its objectives, although delays in the permitting process have affected the original timeline for several actions. Despite these challenges, the project objectives and work plan remain viable, provided that the identified corrective measures are implemented, such as a second extension of the project.

### **A-actions**

A1, A2: Cultural heritage documentation for the watercourses is slightly delayed. However, all important field-based documentation has been delivered, ensuring that risks of damage to cultural heritage objects during restoration are minimized. At the time of this report, four out of six cultural history reports have been completed. Watercourses in the restoration strategy have been mapped (compilation of impacts and identification of appropriate restoration measures) according to the order of restoration. However, not all watercourses have yet been mapped for restoration measures due to delays in the permitting process (see Section 2). These delays have affected the overall project timeline, and several permits are still under court review or yet to be submitted. At the time of reporting, 9 out of 13 permits have been granted, where one is under court review.

A4: Procurement of contractors has functioned well throughout the reporting period. The project has secured the required number of machines and operators, and experience-level requirements have been met. Training for foremen, coordinators, and excavator operators has been implemented according to plan in Västerbotten County, with the last joint training session conducted in 2025. CABJa did not participate due to long travel distances.

### **C- Actions**

C1: During the period covered in this Progress report, 28,8 km have been restored. Accumulated: 89,8 km, representing 64% of the overall project target.

C2: A total of 715 spawning grounds, covering 4 291 m<sup>2</sup> of spawning habitat, were created during the reporting period. Cumulatively, 2 670 spawning grounds, providing 16 023 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible spawning habitat, corresponding to 568% of the project target.

C3: Four wetlands have been restored, rewetting 24 hectares, performed during two restoration efforts, one in Västerbotten- and one in Västernorrland county.

C4: In connection to the C1-restoration activities, 17 scapania sites have been created, with an average of 19 trees per site, whereas 63% of the logs are *very* old wooden debris. These old wooden debris consist ideal habitat for scapania species and can be collected from nearby torn down structures as old dams (C6) or other historical channelizing structures. In total, 73 scapania sites are created to date.

C5: During the reporting period, 54 road culverts were replaced. In total, 134 culverts have been replaced or fully removed, reopening 330 km of watercourses.

C6: Two migration-hindering dams were removed during the reporting period. In total, 16 dams have been removed, reopening 171 km of watercourses.

C7: KAU: Host fish studies were paused in 2024, and 2025 was unsuccessful as mussels released larvae without successful infestation of host fish. The remaining 17 mussels were returned to their home river in November 2025. SAA - *field infestation*: 18 cage trials and 3 artificial infestation trials were conducted in Moälven project area. In parallel, SAA are developing a guideline for the methods of Cage trials and Artificial infestation to support dissemination of these methods by other practitioners working with freshwater pearl mussel

conservation. SAA – *juvenile rearing lab*: The juvenile rearing laboratory has not functioned as intended, and the process of terminating the laboratory has therefore been initiated. A total of 1,148 juvenile mussels were released into the Moälven river system in 2024, and the remaining adult mussels from Hemlingsån and Moälven were returned to their rivers of origin in 2025. CABVb and CABJa have decided not to receive the remaining adult mussels due to the (albeit small) risk of spreading crayfish plague.

C8: One (Öreälven) of six management plans has been completed.

#### **D- actions**

D1: Monitoring of habitat change in streams, drone surveys and laser measures are used continuously, sampling data before and after restoration. Hydrology monitoring (sawdust/drone/salt) have been performed during autumn 2024 and 2025. Spawning ground monitoring was conducted in CABVb in both 2024 and 2025 but did not yield usable results (See Section 2 for corrective actions).

D2: Fish: Standard electrofishing surveys are planned annually at 40 sites. In 2024, 22 of 40 sites were surveyed; in 2025, 39 of 40 sites were surveyed. Annual snorkelling surveys are conducted in CABJa. Fish counters are primarily used in CABJa (see Midterm Report for corrective actions), while smolt screw traps are used in Öreälven and Moälven to complement datasets as well as fish counters in bypass channels in Moälven. Freshwater Pearl mussel: The baseline in glochidia monitoring is complete, with the added sites for both CABVb and CABVn, and the 1<sup>st</sup> post restoration monitoring was performed 2025 for CABVb. Otter have been monitored through standard environmental monitoring program. A special densifying effort will be performed during 2026 or 2027.

#### **E- actions**

E1: Three brochures are under development, covering topics of road culverts, spawning grounds and invasive species (Signal crayfish). Networking activities are prioritized, with project management and coordinators actively presenting Ecostreams at national as international conferences (as Freeflow, SERE, RRC Brighton), hosting field visits (Estonian visitors), and organizing the Nordic Baltic LIFE Platform meeting 2025, with over 100 participants. The project website was updated several times and recorded 1550 unique visitors during the reporting period.

E2: Replicability and transferability plan was developed and successfully submitted in Butler.

E3: Activities related to all three demonstration sites have been initiated. Two sites have been fully implemented, with one meeting held in each. The third demonstration site will be officially done and have the first initiating meeting during 2026.

E4: Five public meetings were held, with an average attendance of 61 participants. The largest event was the Family Day at the Lagnäset demonstration site, organized together with Grip on LIFE, attracting over 200 participants.

E6: One digital landowner meeting was held in the Tällvattsbäcken catchment area (tributary to Öreälven). Of 42 invited landowners, six participated. This low participation rate confirms previous experiences regarding the difficulty of engaging landowners through meeting-based approaches. A modification of this action is therefore proposed (see Section 2).

#### **F- actions**

Steering group meeting was held twice per year during 2024 and 2025. Where work plans, deliverables and the consumed budget are issued during the spring/summer meeting and for the winter meeting, upcoming deliverables, presentation of the field work and budget update is addressed.

## **Section 2 - Identified deviations, problems and corrective actions taken in the period (max 2 pages)**

### **A– actions**

A1: Lack of baseline data. The missing baseline data have now been collected; see the *Baseline Key Indicator Report* submitted in Butler. Delays in cultural heritage reports have occurred; however, restoration activities have not been affected, as all critical information concerning cultural heritage objects has been received in advance.

A2: Lack of permits due to the complexity of the process, high workload at County Administrative Boards (CABs), and long handling times in court. This has had a significant impact on the project, as C1 is the main action requiring permits and is also the largest action in the project. Corrective actions are described under **C-actions** below.

### **C- Actions**

C1: Due to various reasons, some proposed stretches in GA (Grant Agreement) can't be restored. Some of the stretches in Öreälven can be covered with other, fully in Natura2000. Others, in Jämtland county, cannot be covered with Natura2000 sites due to the classification of tributaries. A formal request of performing restoration work of new tributaries, both inside and outside Natura will be submitted by e-mail to PA (Project Adviser), together with the justification attachment from GA. Due to delays in restoration activities, it is assessed that restoration targets will not be fully achieved for CABVn within the current project duration. CABJa is expected to reach its targets, provided that external conditions (e.g. water levels, availability of experienced personnel and contractors) are met. An amendment request for a second project extension will be submitted in spring 2026.

C3: Achieving the target number of plugs (120 plugs) has proven difficult, as plugs are not the sole restoration method used. The project aims to meet the KPI target of 85 restored hectares; however, this may also be challenging. Efforts are ongoing to identify additional suitable areas for restoration than stated in the GA.

C5: Holmen has not prioritised Ecostreams during previous years, which has posed challenges. A new regional manager will join the steering group from 2026, and a prioritisation list has been received, indicating an increased commitment to the project.

C7: KAU: Mussels were released back into their rivers of origin due to difficulties in achieving gravidity in captivity. New gravid mussels will be collected from the Moälven river system in 2026. Releasing mussels to recover in their natural environment and retrieving new individuals is considered more effective than prolonged captive holding.

SAA – field infestation: It is challenging to determine the exact timing of larval release from gravid mussels, requiring frequent and continuous monitoring in project rivers, requiring more field trips than anticipated.

SAA – juvenile rearing lab: Achieving gravidity in adult mussels after extended periods in captivity has proven difficult in this lab as well. Both gravidity and host fish infestation must occur in artificial water systems under laboratory conditions, where it is challenging to maintain all required parameters. As a result, the process of terminating the laboratory has been initiated.

C8: Development of management plans has been more challenging than anticipated, as Fisheries Management Units (FMUs) initially showed limited interest in Moälven and Hemlingsån. However, interest has since increased, and the management plans are currently under development.

### **D-actions**

**D1:** Delays in restoration activities have affected ADCP monitoring across all watercourses, as all sites must be monitored within the same time window, requiring a single consultant procurement.

Hydrological monitoring (sawdust/drone/salt release) in CABJa and CABVn has also been affected, meaning that a second monitoring cycle will not be achieved within the current project duration. If a second project extension is granted, this monitoring will be carried out in 2028. In CABVb, attempts to conduct second-round hydrology monitoring in 2024 and 2025 were unsuccessful due to high water levels; completion is planned for 2026.

Monitoring of spawning grounds has proven more difficult than anticipated, as it is challenging to align fish spawning periods with suitable water levels, as spawning occur during the time where water temperature drops and water levels increase.

**D2:** Glochidia infestation monitoring: A second post-restoration monitoring cycle will not be completed within the current project duration in sites: Ammerån (sites 1–5), Rörströmsälven (sites 6–10), Hemlingsån (Locksjöån), and Hemlingsån (Lillån), due to the delays in restoration activities. If a second project extension is granted, the second monitoring cycle will be conducted in 2028.

### **E-actions**

E6: During the implementation of Activity E6, it became evident that physical and digital forest owner meetings are ineffective, showing very low participation despite targeted invitations. The project therefore proposed replacing meetings with a digital storytelling-based interactive experience map, “Stories by the River”, to reach a broader audience and communicate ecological, cultural, and social values linked to the rivers. This modification was technically accepted by the Project Advisor (email received on 21 January 2026).

### **Conclusion**

Despite the identified deviations and the corrective measures taken, it is likely that not all project targets will be fully achieved within the current project duration. The corrective actions may enable the project to reach its objectives, but this remains uncertain and will be highly dependent on external factors beyond the project’s control. Approval of a second project extension is therefore considered necessary to ensure full achievement of the project objectives and to secure the intended conservation outcomes.