

FINAL SOCIOLOGICAL REPORT

A LOOK AT THE LIFE NATUR'ADAPT COURSE AND ITS LEARNING CHARACTER

The sociological monitoring of LIFE Natur'Adapt was carried out as part of the "monitoring, capitalisation and socio-economic evaluation of the results of the Natur'Adapt project" action. Its aim was to study the process of changing the behaviour of managers of natural areas during the course of the project, thereby contributing to the desired paradigm shift, and to facilitate the learning process of the project's stakeholders. The approach adopted by the sociologists was based on the assumption that Natur'Adapt's capacity to drive change would be all the greater in this process of learning to adapt to climate change, the more the project itself is steered and implemented in a learning and adaptive way.

The methodology proposed as part of the sociological monitoring included 3 survey phases (initial, intermediate and final) on the perceptions, representations and behaviours of Natur'Adapt project practitioners. It also included feedback loops, in which the sociologists presented and discussed their analyses with the practitioners, with a view to holding up a mirror to them on their development and encouraging their reflexive approach. Finally, the sociologists provided support to the LIFE coordinator through quarterly interviews, and to the other beneficiaries through survey interviews and mirror feedback. In the spirit of the project, this methodology was adapted to meet the needs of the project.

The various phases of the survey have shown that participation in LIFE Natur'Adapt has led to changes at several levels among its practitioners: an increase in expertise on the climate and adaptation issue, objectification and solidification of their arguments, greater flexibility in the scale (geographical, temporal) of their thinking, and an increased ability to stand back and let go.

In addition, adaptive project management required learning on the part of the pilots and other project beneficiaries, who developed a work culture specific to the Natur'Adapt approach. This approach incorporates a strong collective dimension, which has permeated the LIFE methodology and is intended to endure within its 'community' as it expands to include new managers and adaptive actions are implemented.

The results obtained by the protected areas that were the first to apply the Natur'Adapt method are promising: on the experimental sites, there has been a clear development in relations with stakeholders around the theme of adaptation to climate change, and the theme has been taken into account by most of the management structures. On the test sites, the year spent testing the method is seen as a stage in the development and initial formalisation of knowledge on the subject, leading to its gradual inclusion in management documents. **In both cases, participation in Natur'Adapt has created a "ratchet effect", i.e. an inability to turn back the clock in terms of the progress made on the topic and the clear impression that Natur'Adapt is the first stage in a process of transformation in the management of the site.**

These results are accompanied by a growing awareness of the importance of the emotional aspect of adaptation (acceptance of uncertainty, mourning for the previous state of affairs, etc.), which has become an integral part of the approach proposed as part of LIFE.

All these factors point to the beginning of a new paradigm in the management of protected areas: from planned management to adaptive management, from the protection of heritage to the preservation of functionalities, with a view to resilience in the face of future changes.



The full report is available here, in French:

BERGE M., COSSON A., 2023. *Regard en miroir sur la trajectoire du LIFE Natur'Adapt et son caractère apprenant (2018-2023)*. LIFE Natur'Adapt – Rapport ACTeon environnement. 102 p.
<https://naturadapt.com/groups/communaute/documents/784/get>

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Partners involved in the project



Project co-financers



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