

Fundusze Europejskie

Restoration for Nature and Residents

European Funds
for Eastern Poland

Republic
of Poland

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The project „Restoring Biodiversity in the Nida River Valley by Rebuilding Ecological Corridors and Increasing Soil Retention" (hereinafter referred to as the Project) is an undertaking carried out along a section of the Nida River Valley, approximately 39 kilometers long, between the towns of Brzeźno and Pińczów.

The main goal is to restore the natural functioning of the river valley, recreate ecological corridors, and restore its natural hydrological and environmental functions, which have been damaged over the years by intensive land improvement and regulation works.





Why Does the Nida River Valley Require Reconstruction?

The Nida River Valley is a valuable natural area of supra-regional importance. However, for decades, it has been subject to numerous hydraulic engineering changes. Drainage works (aimed at permanently improving the agricultural production capacity of the soil), riverbed regulation, and the construction of water facilities (surges, weirs, embankments) have resulted in negative consequences, including:

- **reduced natural water retention**
- **disruption of natural migration corridors for animals**
- **deterioration of habitat conditions for fish and other aquatic organisms**
- **increased flood risk and the gradual depletion of valuable natural areas**

The Project aims to restore the balance between humans and nature. It combines technical measures with nature-based solutions to restore the natural processes occurring in the river valley and improve the functioning of the entire ecosystem.

Six Key Projects for the Nida River Valley

The Project includes six key investment activities, encompassing both hydraulic engineering and renaturalization:

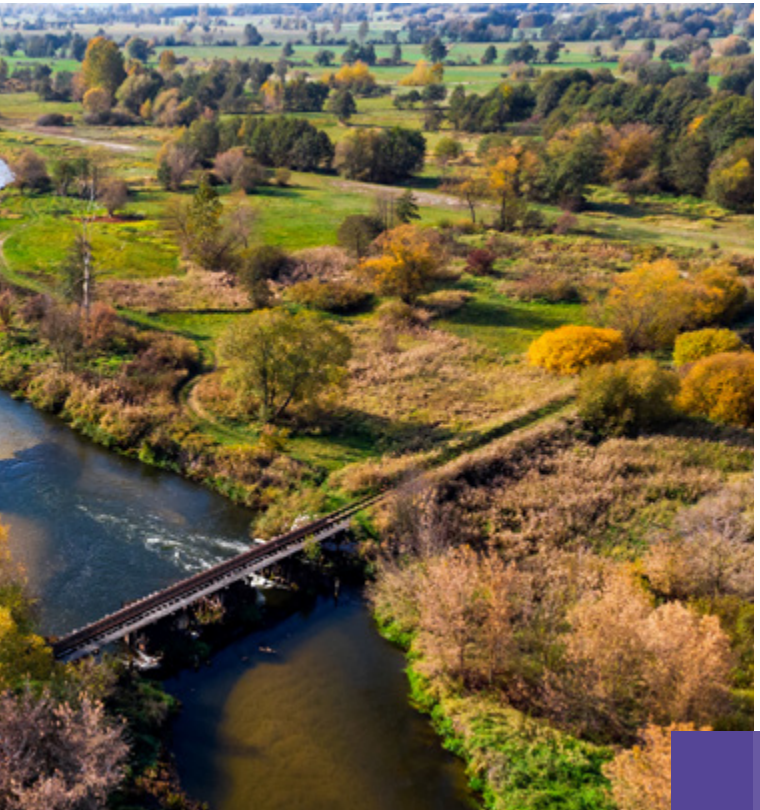
1. **Increasing surface and subsurface retention in the town of Umianowice.**
2. **Restoring the ecological corridor of the Nida River and its tributaries, clearing migration barriers for aquatic organisms on the Nida and Brzeźnica Rivers.**
3. **Restoring the ecological corridor of the Mierzawa River – clearing migration barriers for aquatic organisms.**
4. **Revitalizing the Nida River oxbow lake in Brzeźno.**
5. **Revitalizing the Pińczów Reservoir and the Nida River oxbow lakes near the Pińczów wastewater treatment plant.**
6. **Restoring the Nida River inland delta.**



Key Areas of Change

A river accessible to aquatic life

Unblocking a total of eight barriers on the Nida River and four on the Mierzawa River using „natural" solutions – including the construction of fish passes – is one of the most important elements of the Project. These actions will allow fish and other aquatic organisms to freely bypass obstacles and migrate along the rivers, which in turn will translate into the restoration of the rivers' ecological continuity. This is crucial for the safe wintering of fish, their spawning and feeding migrations, and ultimately for the recovery of populations of many species.



More water retained in the landscape

Construction work carried out as part of the Project also includes the reconstruction and expansion of existing ditches, the use of natural floodplains, and the restoration of oxbow lakes. These activities will retain water in the landscape longer and slow its runoff. This will improve the water balance of the entire region, mitigating the effects of drought (which is crucial for agriculture) and reducing the risk of flooding during heavy rainfall.



Revitalizing oxbow lakes and floodplains

The Project will also include revitalization of oxbow lakes and reservoirs. Partial irrigation and the restoration of a permanent connection between the oxbow lakes and the reservoir and the main Nida River channel will ensure a constant supply of fresh water. This will improve water quality and oxygen conditions for plants and benthic (bottom-dwelling) organisms. This will result in the restoration of valuable natural habitats and improved living conditions for flora and fauna associated with the aquatic environment. This will contribute to the development of wetland vegetation and an increase in the number of habitats for many species, including protected ones.

A natural space for the river

Another important element of the Project is the renaturalization of the Nida River's inland delta. Restoring natural floodplains and river processes will expand the ecological corridor and improve the functioning of the entire valley ecosystem. These activities are important not only for nature but also for the safety of residents living near the river.

Benefits for Nature and Residents

The Project will deliver a number of benefits:

For the environment:

- restoration of natural processes in the Nida River Valley
- improved water quality
- restoration and revitalization of oxbow lakes and wetlands
- increased biodiversity and the development and restoration of valuable habitats
- development of habitats for many protected species
- strengthening fish and other aquatic organism populations by unblocking migration barriers and significantly improving their migration conditions
- improved resilience of the region to the effects of climate change

For residents and agriculture:

- increasing water retention and improving the valley's natural water balance
- reducing the negative effects of drought by retaining water in the landscape
- reducing flood risk and improving the safety of residents by increasing the valley's water retention capacity, which will reduce the risk and impact of flash floods

For society and tourism:

- increasing the attractiveness of the landscape, natural beauty, and tourism in the Nida River Valley
- creating better conditions for recreation and contact with nature
- providing residents and tourists with space for contact with nature



Shared Concern for the Nida River Valley

The Project is aimed at local communities, local governments, farmers, environmental organizations, and anyone interested in nature conservation and the sustainable development of the region. This initiative will help raise public awareness of the importance of protecting aquatic ecosystems and restoring natural processes.

The Project is being implemented with support from European Funds for Eastern Poland for 2021-2027.

Natural Nida is an example of a modern approach to water management combined with environmental protection – one that combines the needs of nature, the safety of residents, and the sustainable development of the region. Instead of traditional, technical methods of river regulation, the Project focuses on solutions that are close to nature. It is an investment in the future of the Nida River Valley and the preservation of its unique character for future generations.

State Water Holding **Polish Waters**

Regional Water Management Authority in Kraków

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