

With financial support of the European Union

# Mapping and restoring fens and lean wet meadows

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# Challenges

**Fens and lean wet meadows** are among the **most endangered** habitats in the cultural landscape, esp. in the Waldviertel (AT) Serious threat due to drainage and more intensive use **Loss** of:



- Provision of important ESS (flood protection, CO2 sequestration)
- Biodiversity (valuable, often priority habitats and the hosted plant and animal species)
- Protective objects, i.a.: FFH habitat type 6410, 6230 FFH species 1059, 1060, 1061

>Needed improvements:

- Stop of wetland drainage & fen renaturation
- Appropriate management of wet meadows Why is the project interesting? It targets a topic of utmost importance and mitigate the **biodiversity & climate** crisis by protecting fragile and highly threatened habitats and species



Sanguisorba officinalis, a typical species for wet meadows

# **Objectives**

Overall, in the long-term, the project aims to:

**Favorable conservation** status of FFH habitats & species

# Approach

Data

Acquisition

**Practical** 

**Implementation** 

**Participative** 

approach

Public

**Relations** 

The project's strategy follows several approaches to achieve its goals:

• Classification & location of fens & lean wet meadows: - machine learning approach using Sentinel-2 satellite data - different ground truth data (habitat catalogues, field mappings) - data on soil and water supply to find suitable mapping areas - comprehensive analysis of the project area

• Implementation of restoration measures on selected sites:

- **Secured provision** of important ecosystem services
- **Tackle biodiversity loss & climate change** along the EGB European Green Belt (EGB)
- **Reach people along the EGB**, communicate the vision and goals of the European initiative, make them feel part of it

### The desired outcomes can be summed up as:

- >Build-up knowledge about the occurrence of fens and lean wet meadows in the project area
- > Testing sustainable management method for fens & lean wet meadows  $\geq$ Increase the conservation status of 3 fens/lean wet meadows sites
- > Spread knowledge about the value of wetlands & fens, their restoration and the Green Belt Europe in general
- ➢Implementation of a Green Belt Camp

#### - closing drainage ditches with clay barriers

- Pipe mechanism for opening ditches just prior to mowing - not very costly and easy to apply, which makes them easily replicable
- Cooperation with communities and PA administrations: - Consultation with PAs to present distribution of target habitats - Proposal of measures
- Further discussion in workshops
- Preparation the GBC for implementing rest. measures

#### • Emphasis on public relations work:

- highlight values of fens & wetlands for adaptation to climate change
- importance for the preservation of biodiversity
- raise awareness of the critical role of these habitats along the EGB and their impending destruction through social media and articles

# **Project overview**

#### Lead partner:



**Location**: Western Waldviertel region, Lower Austria







**Project** *partner*:



Universität Dept. of Botany & Biodiversity Research, University of Vienna

**Duration**:

November 2022 – December 2023

More information:

https://www.noe-naturschutzbund.at

