

## **A RIVER'S CONTRACT FOR THE UPPER OFANTO RIVER AS CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE TERRITORY RESTORATION TOOL**

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**Track b.** Resilient spaces of river fruition

**Key words:** river's contract; river and landscape restoration; involvement - negotiation - participative approach.

### **Abstract**

The Consortium GAL CILSI (Local Action Group for the development of upper Irpinia area) is directly interested and sensible since its foundation to the environmental matter and the recovery and preservation of the most important identifying element of the area: the Ofanto river. In order to fulfil this objective, the Consortium has recently started a strategic, negotiative and participative planning and programming pathway for the analysis of the territory and to work out a strategy made of objectives and actions in order to achieve the environmental restoration and sustainable development of the area. The River Contract (RC) has been selected as the most appropriate tool.

This tool could merge the several elements of the local landscape: nature, social, history, perception, tourism attraction, economic, planning and designing.

The main aspect of this tool is the voluntarily participation of all the local stakeholders: citizens, environmental, professional and trade organizations, companies, local authorities and government bodies. Thanks to the participative approach, all the stakeholders are able to share their point of view, needs and instances in specific meetings, such as forum or focus groups.

The particular attention of the RC participative process, towards the rediscovery of the cultural identity of the fluvial landscape, is highlighted by the desire of rebuilding the historical memory of the Ofanto river. This activity was carried out through direct sharing of historical memories of lovers of the river during the forums, such as the one organized with the local *Parco Letterario De Santis* (which promotes the local literature culture), showing the historical direct relationship between citizens and the river, vanished over the years because of the continuous exploitation of water, of the fluvial territory and the depletion of environmental resource of the river. During all the meetings of participation made for the RC process many ideas of past use of the river have emerged. The upper Ofanto valley people in the past had a direct contact with the river and it was a real presence in their lives. Due to the gradual pollution, watercourse modifications, the accessibility to the river sacrificed for the highway running close to the river stream, caused a loss of connection between the people and the river. Forums' participants stated several interesting proposals for the recovery of this cultural value and identity of the area. The working group, in order to raise the awareness of the future generations and for a direct involvement in the proposal, has also decided to organize meetings with students, to collect proposals from this range of population.

All proposals, requests, contributions received by the stakeholder participants will then be revised by the working group, together with the technical evidence emerged, in order to draw up the RC and the Objectives Plan that as a general vision of recovery and restoration of natural environment and of the identity of the territory of the upper valley of the Ofanto river.

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