

## FRANCE

# Biodiversity restoration, preservation and enhancement

### Location

Limousin

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P4 – Ecosystems  
management

### Measure

M7 – Basic services and  
village renewal

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 18 927  
EAFRD 9 357  
National/Regional 9 570

### Project duration

2018 – 2018

### Project promoter

Limousin Nature  
Environment

### Contact

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### Website

<http://lne-asso.fr/zero-pesticide/>

**A project that supported local municipalities in their campaign to reduce the use of pesticides by their citizens.**

## Summary

A number of municipalities in Limousin, France, formalised their commitment to reduce the use of pesticides by signing the ‘Zero Pesticide Objective in our towns and villages’ agreement with Limousin Nature Environment, a federation of environmental associations of Limousin committed to the fight against pesticides.

Educational activities, technical expertise and advice, communication support and awareness raising were provided to staff of the municipalities in order to support their campaign to engage their local communities in shifting away from the use of pesticides.



## Results

The project was promoted and coordinated at regional level, gathering institutional partners and designing information and communication campaigns.

Educational support was offered to municipalities that signed the ‘zero pesticide’ charter, and the progress towards zero pesticides was monitored.

The awareness of public employees, local and technical staff was raised, upscaling their communication abilities towards the local population and a wider audience.

Technical assistance to municipalities on regulatory requirements and their communication plans was promoted.

The project developed communication activities on alternative pest management practices.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The most interesting aspect of this project is that it went beyond the local authorities’ request to reach the zero pesticide goal in the municipality, as the political decision also needed to be understood by the citizens.

## Context

Even if used in small quantities, pesticides are a significant source of pollution. Some of these products used in gardens can potentially contaminate the soil, the air and the water. All types of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides) are dangerous and they can be responsible for the disappearance of insects, birds, frogs and fish as well as certain serious disorders among people (allergies, headaches, cancers, infertility etc.). However, multiple alternative solutions to pesticides exist (mulching, botanical extracts).

Within this framework, some municipalities in Limousin, France, formalised their commitment to reduce the use of pesticides by signing the ‘Zero Pesticide Objective in our towns and villages’ agreement with Limousin Nature Environment, a federation of environmental associations of Limousin, the Fredon Limousin – the Regional Federation for the fight against pesticides.

## Objectives

The projects aimed to provide educational support for the already engaged elected officials of the municipalities, who still face difficulties in promoting the initiative due to lack of communication (attendance at public meetings, press articles for local newspapers, exhibitions, conferences, etc.). Expertise during public events (country markets, fairs, local festive days) and during training of agents were planned.

## Activities

Each municipality interested in the scheme makes contact with the NGO or one of its partner organisations and is offered the chance to connect with a nearby municipality already committed and keen to share experience. At the end of this first contact, if the municipality confirms its interest in engaging in the scheme, it will be offered an assessment of its pesticide use (technical and regulatory). Thereafter, a roadmap of educational and technical actions aiming to move towards zero pesticide use is set up (public conference, debate with citizens, gardening workshops in schools, information stand on alternative cultivation techniques, on the effects of pesticides on health, presentation and demonstration of thermal weeding equipment (municipal staff), exhibitions, vocational training, weed control management plan, etc.). During one of these activities signing the ‘Objective: zero pesticide’ charter is organised, as a way of formalising and mediating the operation.

Each committed municipality puts in place one or more indicators to effectively appraise the zero pesticide goal. These indicators are monitored by the NGO in order to measure progress over time.



## Main results

During the project cycle, the following activities were carried out:

- Promotion and coordination of the project at regional level, gathering institutional partners and designing information and communication campaigns (8 days);
- Offering of educational support to municipalities that signed the ‘zero pesticide’ charter, upon request, and monitoring the progress towards zero pesticides (14 days). Also, the designing and development of a compendium of municipalities committed to the zero pesticide goal through the collection of data such as (i) input quantity in use, (ii) treated surface, (iii) blocking factors;
- Supporting new municipalities joining the scheme and answering information requests (8 days); including:
  - Answering requests regarding the charter implementation, technical, educational or financial means and tools and regulatory requirements;
  - Participating in local assessment (*diagnostics*);
  - Providing assistance in the design of a sustainable management plan; and
  - Sharing technical factsheets about alternative methods to the use of pesticides.
- Raised awareness of public employees, local and technical staff, upskilling their communication abilities towards the local population and a wider audience (10 days). This action included a training session with a focus on communication and designing the signs and posters to be made available to each municipality;

- Providing technical assistance to municipalities on (i) regulatory requirements and (ii) their communication plans (24 days);
  - Designed and set up public advertising and display about regulations;
  - Raised citizens’ awareness about alternative practices and induced change thereof (weeds on public space, mulching, grass cover, etc.);
  - Encouraged citizens to change their gardening practice by following the municipality’s example;
  - Designed the information tools (posters, press release, etc.) in cooperation with the local elected representatives;
  - Designed and facilitated public events and animations for local citizens (stand, debate, gardening workshop, etc.) in compliance with the municipality’s choice; and
  - Organised and participated in meetings and information exchange at county level ( *Département*), such as round tables, thematic workshops, sharing of good practice.
- Developing communication activities on alternative practices towards a wider audience through garden centres, gardening groups (i.e. community gardens, etc.) with the aim of anticipating the 2019 regulation on pesticides’ market withdrawal (7 days);
  - Built partnerships with gardening stores and centres;
  - Delivered information to professional staff; and
  - Set up information stands.
- Communicating the waste management options in cooperation with waste management centres (old packaging and jerry cans) (3 days).

### Key lessons

The most interesting aspect of this project is that it went beyond the local authorities’ request to reach the zero pesticide goal in the municipalities, as the political decision also needed to be understood by the citizens. The role of a ‘go-between’ between the local elected representatives and citizens enhances the local democracy dimension.

*“The scheme is of particular interest due its multi-level governance features, combining a diverse range of stakeholders in a local area: elected representatives, administrative staff, NGOs, citizens.”*

Jean-Jacques RABACHE, Director of Limousin natural environment

### Additional sources of information

[www.facebook.com/Limousin-Nature-Environnement-195393110544031/](https://www.facebook.com/Limousin-Nature-Environnement-195393110544031/)