

Building a fish bypass around Olkkalankoski dam, Finland



Project Duration: 3 years

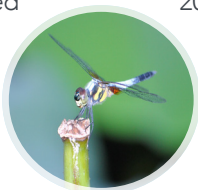
Vihtijoki river has been heavily altered to support local industry. EKOenergy gave 50,000 € to finance a number of restoration efforts along the river, including the construction of a fish bypass around Olkkalankoski dam.

Text: Cameron Boggon

Photo: Markus Penttinen

Virtavesien Hoitoyhdistys, the Finnish Society for Stream Conservation, has been working to restore the Vihtijoki river, in southern Finland, for over a decade. The roughly 17 rapid sections along the river provide ideal spawning grounds for trout, who like to lay their eggs in gravel beds in flowing water.

However, industry in the area has historically been highly damaging to the Vihtijoki fish population. Dredging and other river alterations, carried out to support log driving, have destroyed many spawning grounds. While the construction of four hydroelectric dams along Mustionjoki river, downstream from Vihtijoki, wiped out the salmon population in the watershed.



EKOenergy gave 50,000 € to the Finnish Society for Stream Conservation to finance a number of river restoration initiatives on Vihtijoki river. Two rapid sections at Kraatarinkoski and Lustikullankoski were restored by adding gravel to create new spawning grounds. Wooden material was also added to provide habitats for crayfish and insects, like caddisflies. In turn, these support birds, otters and fish in the river.

"The positive effects have been observed rapidly." Says Markus Penttinen, the voluntary project coordinator: "the number of fish has increased 300 - 500%. The rise is remarkable, but we have to remember that the starting level was very low. The 'final' increase should be about 1000%".

In addition to the restoration of rapids, a fish bypass was constructed around the Olkkalankoski dam. For the first time in 200 years, trout are now able to swim up and downstream of the dam so have access to a much larger proportion of the river. Much of this work received popular attention by local news outlets and on social media. The work has been strengthening environmental awareness and dialogue around issues of river ecosystems: "People are starting to understand that a flourishing river is also an attractive factor for the well-being of people and for the economy. For instance, there is a major difference whether the river is with or without trout and salmon when you try to sell your land."

The Finnish Society for Stream Conservation plans to continue their outreach work and efforts to restore Vihtijoki river. There is still a lot of work to be done.

ENVIRONMENTAL FUND



EKOenergy funds river restoration projects annually



Projects implemented by trustworthy local organisations



Projects selected by independent jury of experts



In 2016, EKOenergy donated 80,000 € to 2 projects



Funding comes from sales of EKOenergy ecolabeled hydro-power

EKOenergy - the international ecolabel for renewable energy

EKOenergy is [the international ecolabel](#) for energy. We are a nonprofit ecolabel, supported by a growing international group of over 40 environmental organisations.

EKOenergy not only excludes fossil fuels and nuclear power, but demands strict [sustainability criteria for renewable energy](#) production. We also support new renewable energy production through our Climate Fund.

Ecolabelled electricity is [available for all types of organisations](#) and international corporations. It is a cost-efficient way to reduce your organisation's carbon footprint and communicate about your choice by using the well-known ecolabel.

EKOenergy users include large international businesses such as SAP, Tetra Pak, Groupe Rocher, VMware, Genelec and L'Oréal, as well as cities and other public organisations.



Sustainability criteria: additional value for our planet

	EKOenergy	Other renewable	Mixed sources
New renewable energy production via our Climate Fund	✓	?	-
Only the most climate friendly bioenergy	✓	?	-
Wind power outside bird and nature areas	✓	?	-
Hydropower takes into account migratory fish. River restoration projects via our Environmental Fund .	✓	?	-
Renewable energy tracked by GOs, RECs, I-RECs	✓	✓	-
Wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, bioenergy	✓	✓	?
Fossil fuels, nuclear, possibly renewables	-	-	✓

Endorsed by other standards

EKOenergy is mentioned by the most well-known international environmental standards, such as Greenhouse Gas Protocol, Greenkey for hotels and LEED certification for buildings.

"EKOenergy represents the [best available option](#) for the sustainable and additional consumption of renewable electricity within Europe."



"Ecolabels are a way for companies to do more with their purchases. EKOenergy, mentioned by the GHG protocol Scope 2 guidance, is such an option: it is [a mark of quality](#) which comes on top of tracking certificates."



"A growing number of hotels in Europe have already switched to EKOenergy and include the EKOenergy logo in their communication with their guests. Follow their lead and [go the extra mile](#)."



EKOenergy

info@ekoenergy.org | www.ekoenergy.org

