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Restoring Peatlands and applying Concepts for Sustainable Management in Belarus

A Climate Change Mitigation project with Economic and Biodiversity Benefits





No water, no mire – rewetting enables the revitalisation of peatlands



Many mire bird species are threatened – such as the Aquatic Warbler, the only globally threatened songbird of continental Europe



The project builds on biomass use experience from peatlands e.g. from Poland



Mire plants such as the Marsh Marigold are often economic plants, medicinal plants – and simply beautiful

Conservation and sustainable use of peatlands is a key target of international nature conservation and climate protection. Belarus currently offers the opportunity to implement this objective on a large scale in cooperation with experienced partners.

Restoration and sustainable management of degraded ecosystems – preserve and sustain – is a promising approach to meet the challenges of global change. The restoration of peatlands allows for multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity, and mankind.

Peatlands store carbon. Drained peatlands release carbon and enhance the greenhouse effect significantly. Belarus constitutes an important hotspot of greenhouse gas emissions from degraded peatlands. These emissions could be avoided through peatland restoration. The project aims to create and test the methodology to assess emissions from degraded and restored peatlands and to facilitate the certification and sale of carbon credits on the voluntary market.

The project aims to demonstrate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the related biodiversity benefits through restoration and sustainable management of large degraded peatlands. In the first phase, the re-wetting of 15,000 hectares peatland and thus the avoidance of approx. 100,000 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalents per year is planned. The methodology to be developed creates the basis for the re-wetting of up to 520,000 hectares peatland in Belarus. The risk of peat fires that threaten environment and health will be strongly reduced by the project. Intensive training and capacity building will help strengthening the Belarusian competence in peatland restoration.

Biodiversity

Degraded, dead peatlands will convert into living ecosystems. Habitats of threatened animals and plants such as the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and the Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) will be restored.

Economic Benefits

Local economies will initially benefit from implementation of project measures, and later on from project site management. As a part of long-term management of project sites, the use of biomass from the peatlands will be tested and could help to achieve positive effects for climate and biodiversity.