

## France

# The Isère Amont project, led by Egis, awarded National Engineering Award (GPNI) in France for its sustainable river development vision

On October 21st, the integrated development project Isère Amont, for which Egis served as project manager, was awarded the *Grand Prix National de l'Ingénierie* in the "Adapting existing infrastructure to address the causes or effects of climate change" category. This prestigious national recognition highlights a pioneering initiative that redefines flood risk management.



*Upstream view of the Isère River from a vertical perspective above the Egis offices in Seyssins or the Artelia offices in Échirolles, showing the footprint of the flood control infrastructure (CIC) and the Q200 floodplain. The Chartreuse mountains appear to the left, Belledonne to the right, with Mont Blanc in the background. © SYMBHI*

## Isère Amont: Shifting the paradigm by restoring the river's place

The Grésivaudan Valley, an alpine corridor in southeastern France located upstream from the city of Grenoble, has long been shaped by agriculture and industry. Following major river engineering works—particularly after the 1859 flood—the valley's natural fluvial dynamics were disrupted. Today, it faces a significant flood risk, threatening 300,000 residents and potentially causing damages estimated at over one billion euros.

Launched by the Syndicat Mixte de Bassins Hydrauliques de l'Isère (SYMBHI), with the support of its delegated contracting authority Elegia Territoires 38, the Isère Amont project rethinks flood risk management.

Egis, lead contractor for project management, alongside Artelia (upstream design) and Hydrétudes (environmental and ecological lead), have embraced a paradigm shift: giving the Isère more space and restoring its interactions with both natural and urban environments over a stretch of more than 40 km.

Following the initial study phases, the consortium led by Egis carried out the full scope of design and construction supervision over three successive contracts, spanning a period of 15 years from 2008 to 2023. The contracts included the missions defined by the French MOP law, as well as additional support services such as stakeholder engagement and assistance with the preparation of certain administrative files.

## **A new hydraulic planning strategy**

Rather than confining the river, the project takes a controlled approach to freeing its channel and restoring its natural dynamics:

- 16 controlled flood expansion areas (CIC) across 3,600 hectares, with a storage capacity of 35 million m<sup>3</sup>
- 42 spillways and 4 mobile gates
- 17 km of containment dikes and 21 km of reinforced dikes
- An agricultural compensation protocol for flood-prone areas

Objective: to protect 29 municipalities from flooding, while promoting a more natural management of the river and its floodplain.

The project, spanning 18 years and backed by a budget of €135 million — 6% from AERMC, 43% from the French State, and 51% from SYMBHI via the Isère Department and local authorities (Grenoble Métropole and the Grésivaudan intermunicipal community) — was put to the test during the 2023 flood.

## **An ambitious ecological restoration strategy**

From its inception, the project embraced an aquatic ecosystem management (GEMA) approach, including:

- 14 km of levees removed, 6 km of levees set back, and 300 hectares of alluvial forest reconnected
- 4 river side channels reopened, wetlands and gravel pits restored
- Fish migration routes and ecological corridors reinforced
- Landscape enhancements: soft mobility paths, green rest areas, and signage

These measures restore a mosaic of habitats that support biodiversity, including bioindicator species such as *Typha minima* (dwarf bulrush) and the beaver.

Designed with residents in mind, the project includes landscaped developments, cycling and walking paths, green rest areas, and educational signage. Delivered in 2023 after 18 years of consultation, design, and construction, Isère Amont showcases the power of engineering to combine public safety, territorial resilience, and ecological restoration.



Gravière Manon reconnected to the Isère both upstream and downstream (La Pierre) ©SYMBHI



Levee setback, opening of existing levees, and reconnection of an abandoned river channel (Lumbin)©SYMBHI



Flooding of the alluvial forest (Champ près Froges, La Pierre) ©SYMBHI

## A project aligned with Egis's core climate commitments:

- Greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2033: - 55% of total direct and travel emissions; -61% reduction in carbon intensity of other significant Scope 3 emissions. By 2050, 90% reduction in all emissions.
- Lower emissions from client projects and minimize their impact on biodiversity
- Carbon sequestration: restoration of natural ecosystems
- Enhance the resilience of territories to climate risks
- Business portfolio transformation: significantly increase the proportion of projects contributing to the ecological and energy transition by 2030.

## About Egis

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**IMAGINE. CREATE. ACHIEVE.**  
*a sustainable future*

Egis is a leading global architectural, consulting, construction engineering, operations and mobility services firm. We create and operate intelligent infrastructure and buildings that both respond to the climate emergency and contribute to balanced, sustainable and resilient development.

Our 22,000 employees operate across over 100 countries, deploying their expertise to develop and deliver cutting-edge innovations and solutions for clients. Through the wide range of our activities, we are central to the collective organisation of society and the living environment of citizens all over the world.

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