

## Association Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

### Preamble

For the association IFGR, 2022 marked a major **turning point towards the general public** with three projects that were prepared throughout the first semester to converge in the second: the first edition of the international mobilisation for rivers, *Living with Rivers*, launched at the end of June (but started in 2021 regarding its conception); the exhibition *We, the rivers* at the Musée des Confluences in which IFGR was a partner, and the launching in bookshops of the book *La Terre a soif (The Thirsty Earth)*, written by Erik Orsenna with IFGR.

These actions made it possible to disseminate to the general public the messages and convictions acquired by the Rivers Committee over the last five years as its works and projects have progressed. In a context of increasing awareness of climate change, water is more than ever a decisive marker of these disruptions, with lasting drought in Europe and deadly floods in other continents in 2022. IFGR has not only continued to sound the alarm regarding the threats that loom over rivers but has also proposed solutions that can be replicated from one river basin to another, and created a collective narrative around rivers to facilitate a concerted movement to preserve their future and that of human beings.

Besides the diversification of its audience, the association **continued to develop its economic model**, with new sources of finance. Henceforth, it is positioned as a reference on rivers, benefiting from a larger audience and a voice that carries further, the results of the implementation of its strategy and its action plan for 2021-2022.

## INTERNAL FUNCTIONING of the Association and relations with THIRD PARTIES

### 1. Life of the association

#### Appointment of a new General Secretary

As the General Secretary of the association did not wish to continue their mandate, which expired at the end of 2021, Laurence Borie-Bancel, Chairwoman of CNR, appointed Clémence Aubert as the founding member's second representative. The administrators entrusted her with the mandate of **General Secretary** at the **Management Board meeting held on 30 June**. It was agreed during the previous Management Board meeting that the mandate of Aziz Ouabi was temporarily prolonged until the end of June.

### Recruitment of a new director for the Association

By joint agreement of the three parties, the convention making Marie-Cécile Grisard available to hold the post of Director of IFGR following her transfer in CNR on 4 July 2022 was terminated.

Her replacement was sought from outside the company. Sophie Gardette took on her functions as a fulltime salaried employee of the Association on 14 November 2022.

Furthermore, to face the increase in activity linked to the Living with Rivers project, coupled with the exhibition at the Musée des Confluences in the autumn, the academic internship of Camille Larminay, was extended on a temporary basis for the months of September and October.

### Financial orientations

A **Board meeting** was held on **6 April** to take stock of the Association's exceptional financial situation, owing to the non-payment of CNR's donation on the due date (*cf. point 3*). In conformity with the demand made by the administrators during the Board meeting of 30 November 2021, no new major financial commitment was made for the first quarter of 2022. Furthermore, the budget forecasts for the year were revised downwards to reach €577,500. The administrators agreed to engage expenses within this new budgetary framework.

The Board meeting also approved the activity report and financial report presented later to the members of the General Assembly and their vote, and close the accounts for the year ended on 31/12/2021.

They were then presented to the members at an **Ordinary General Assembly** organised on 29 April. This meeting also allowed taking stock of the project *Living with Rivers* which structured the association's activities in 2022 and of the directions desired by the administrators regarding the future of IFGR.

## 2. Activity of the Future of Great Rivers Fund

It should be recalled that the association set up this endowment fund in July 2021 to associate private sponsors with its actions and integrate them in its governance. This fund became active in 2022 with the **initial donation paid by the founding member of IFGR** of €15,000 and the arrival of the first sponsor, **the Vicat Group, as a benefactor member**, which pledged support of €20,000 per year for three years (convention signed on 5 April 2022).

In pursuit of the action to seek funds launched during the second semester of 2021, much work was done to prospect for funds starting in June of this year, in the framework of *Living with Rivers* and on a more durable basis with the endowment fund. This gave rise to a presentation meeting gathering 10 companies and foundations and discussions are continuing with several of them to forge partnerships.

In 2022 IFGR continued its participation in the **French Centre of Funds and Foundations**, which groups more than 400 members active in the sector of sponsorships and philanthropy. In the French Coalition of Foundations for the Climate, IFGR intervened in the Climate Awakening devoted to the Ocean and then to a webinar devoted to SDG 6 of the *Fondation AG2R La Mondiale*.

### 3. Relations with third parties

A **partnership framework agreement** was signed on 19 May 2022 **between the Musée des Confluences, Erik Orsenna and IFGR** relating to the exhibition dedicated to rivers (*We, the rivers*) presented by the museum and the first edition of *Living with Rivers*, hosted within its premises. The partnership thus forged is very rich, and is based on:

- the participation of Erik Orsenna and IFGR in the exhibition's scientific committee;
- the visibility of IFGR as a partner through the brand *Living with Rivers* on all the communication media linked to the exhibition;
- the contributions of Erik Orsenna to the communication related to the exhibition (exhibition book, press relations, texts for the collection *Narratives of Objects*);
- the inclusion of the closing event of *Living with Rivers* in the Museum's programming around the exhibition.

Furthermore, for the organisation of the closing event of ***Living with Rivers*** in Lyon, IFGR received financial support from the **General Secretariat for Regional Affairs** and the **Rhone-Mediterranean-Corsica Water Agency in the framework of the Rhone-Saone Plan**. The subsidies amounted to €20,000 and €10,000 respectively.

A **publishing contract** was signed on 13 May 2022 between the **Librairie Arthème Fayard, Erik Orsenna and IFGR**, for the book "***La Terre a soif – petit précis de mondialisation VII***" (*The Thirsty Earth – short essay on globalisation VII*) launched on 28 September. It specified the procedures of transferring the copyright, publication and exploitation between the author and the publisher and the obligations of the latter. The IFGR association is recognised as the co-author of this work and as such receives royalties.

**In conformity with the rider of the agreement** signed on 14 December 2021 and **linking the Association and CNR for the period 2021-2025**, the financial support of CNR to IFGR for the year 2022 depended on lifting two suspensive conditions: CNR being awarded the extension of its concession and the implementation of the Plan5Rhône. Thus, the donation could not be paid until 21 July.

Lastly, as mentioned in point 2, in April 2022 **the Future of Great Rivers Fund and the Vicat Group** signed a **sponsorship agreement** for three years, with indications of the donation to the Association's activities.

## ACTIONS IN THE GENERAL INTEREST IN PROJECT MODE organised with the Association's partners

### 1. International mobilisation for rivers: *Living with Rivers*



IFGR conceived this project (subject to the registration of a brand) as a global conversation between rivers and stakeholders, in the form of a biennial combining narratives by artists, analyses by experts and managers, and testimonies from users, to understand, recount and involve one and all in preserving rivers. For this first edition, the rivers **Rhone, Saint Lawrence, and Senegal** held centre stage, with the members of IFGR concerned

involved in the Steering Committee.

The first edition made it possible to **test the concept, for the most part based on voluntary contributions and IFGR's capacity to address the general public** via new means of communication: dedicated social networks; an immersive internet site, a live event designed like a TV programme; and ambassadors. The project was carried out in two phases:

- A **100% digital phase** to build a community around rivers from June to September,
- And a **more statutory phase in September and October with a closing event** hosted by the Musée des Confluences, coupled with the opening of the exhibition at the museum and the launching of the book *La Terre a soif* (The Thirsty Earth). This event was attended by 142 guests invited by IFGR and the general public. It provided the occasion to launch the manifesto "*Let rivers live*" that could be signed by all, giving 8 priority directions of action.

Several indicators of the event's success:

- **More than 14,000 subscribers** (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter) followed the news on rivers for 4 months and a **million consultations** (*interactions with accounts without subscription*),
- More than **50 articles published** and **2,400 views** on the dedicated internet site [living-with-rivers.com](http://living-with-rivers.com),
- **More than 1,800 direct views** on the social networks and **310 spectators** in the main auditorium of the museum (full),
- A media partnership with the **magazine Sans Transition**,
- A hundred signatures of the **manifesto** since it went online (*on 20/12/2022*) and an open forum in [LeMonde.fr](http://LeMonde.fr) associated with 26 October.



*From left to right: speech by Nicolas Gilsoul, alongside Erik Orsenna and François Pécheux during the evening; the IFGR members gathered on stage to launch the manifesto "Let rivers live"; representatives of companies and institutions invited to the cocktail party after the live event: Gauthier Chapuis, City of Lyon - Pascal Mailhos, Prefect of Rhone - Hélène Lafont-Couturier, director of the museum - Erik Orsenna – Pierre Athanaze, Greater Lyon – Laurence Borie-Bancel.*

## 2. The launch of the collective work *The Thirsty Earth*



Proposed by Erik Orsenna to the members of IFGR as long ago as October 2019, during the international session in China, **this work is a showcase of the knowhow gathered within the association, the lessons learned since it was founded in 2015 on rivers, and its unique approach** based on multidisciplinary skills and partnerships that have led it to acquire its current recognition and legitimacy.

It is also the result of a lasting editorial effort carried out by Erik Orsenna and open to the members of IFGR and people from outside the association, to accomplish a tour around world of 33 rivers associated with analyses.

The book *The Thirsty Earth— a short essay on globalisation VII*, published by Fayard, appeared in bookshops in France at the end of September, following a summer marked by a long drought and insufficient water. This context strengthened media coverage of the subject. Its promotion, ensured by the publisher's press service, gave **high visibility to the association, CNR and the exhibition at the Musée des Confluences, thanks to the interviews with Erik Orsenna.**

On the occasion of the plenary IFGR meeting in Lyon at the end of October, **a conference combined with a book signing session** was organised in the bookshop *Raconte-moi la Terre* with Erik Orsenna and all the panel (50 members of the public attended).

## 3. The exhibition “We the Rivers” at the Musée des Confluences

IFGR was closely associated with the design and organisation of the exhibition that the Musée des Confluences wanted to devote to rivers as a **partner** (its logo is displayed on all the communication media) **and a member of the Commission** (assistance to the exhibition curator for the content and networking with other cultural institutions for loans of objects; training of mediators; support for the programming; choosing a name, etc.). Erik Orsenna was the scientific commissioner and one of the spokespeople.



The exhibition *We, the rivers* was opened to the public on 21 October for 10 months (until 27 August 2023). The closing event of *Living with Rivers*, organised at the Musée des Confluences, once again spotlighted the exhibition a week after it opened, by echoing in sequence the major themes presented and offering live videos in duplex from the exhibition rooms.

## 4. Continuing existing projects

### *The plastic free river and protected ocean charter*

IFGR a continued the plastic-free rivers initiative launched in 2020 with the **Tara Ocean Foundation and CNR**, which groups local authorities (170, including 6 new ones in 2022) around the objective of combating plastic pollution.

The Steering Committee welcomed a third association of elected representatives, **the Eco-Mayors** (more than 2,000-member local authorities in France and its overseas territories) **and the French Rowing Federation** became partners of the Charter. The signature of the partnership took place on 23 November, during the Mayors of France Show.



➔ <https://www.fleuve-sans-plastique.fr/>

### *Ocean and River Reference Framework*

IFGR pursued the collaboration begun with the **Fondation de la Mer** in 2021 to propose a tool to companies allowing them to better assess and control their impacts on aquatic environments, related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 14 of Agenda 2030. Established as an extension of the Ocean reference framework proposed two years ago by the Fondation de la Mer, this year the tool is being implemented in a pilot phase in the Rhone Valley by two companies: the Vicat Group and SOGESTRAN, and with assistance from Bureau Veritas, auditor of the reference framework.

## ACTIONS IN THE GENERAL INTEREST IN EVENT FORMAT of the Association

### 1. Dialogue with Emma Haziza



On 11 May, IFGR organised a dialogue with Emma Haziza, hydrologist, and President-founder of Mayane, a research-action centre for providing adaptation solutions to towns faced with the impacts of climate change. The webinar, focused on the theme "**Water and Adaptation to Climate Change**" brought together around 80 participants.

### 2. Plenary IFGR session in Lyon, on the occasion of Living with Rivers

IFGR gathered its members in a plenary session in Lyon (at the head office of CNR) from 26 to 28 October on the occasion of the event *Living with Rivers*. Most of IFGR's members were able to make the journey for these 3 days of exchange.



The guests in the delegation included Carola Hein, professor at the University of Delft (Netherlands), director of the UNESCO Water, Ports and Historic Cities Chair; and Jean-Eric Turcotte, General Manager of Saint-Lawrence Strategies (Canada), who were relays with the action Living with Rivers.

Lucile Solari, journalist with the **Swiss radio station RTS**, followed the works for one day and devoted 25 minutes to IFGR, with an interview with Erik Orsenna in her programme *Prise de Terre* on 5 November.

### 3. Corporate communication / actions

Despite the priority given to Living with Rivers, IFGR continued its regular communication on rivers via its **newsletter *The Climate of Rivers*** (3 editions and 1 special Living with Rivers edition) and its social networks, with strong progression of its Linked-In community which relayed Living with Rivers. The corporate internet site saw a drop in audience, linked to the online launching of the site dedicated to the mobilisation, and to the concentration of communication on this new media.

#### *In a few figures – on 20/12/2022:*

**Linked-in:** 2,200 subscribers (+ 77% versus 2021)

**Twitter:** 1,062 subscribers (+ 7.6% versus 2021)

**Internet site:** 39,690 (-1,382 versus 2021) for 61,481 pages seen.

Furthermore, IFGR continued its political advocacy for rivers:

- **Internationally**, by pushing the candidacy of the **OMVS** for the Nobel Peace Prize alongside the RIOB and the Geneva Water Hub;
- **In France**, the transmission of a framework document to the **Secretary of State for Biodiversity** for its international water coalition project and a document to the **President of the Republic** on water and adaptation to climate change, with the French Partnership for Water and the French Circle for Water.

## PARTICIPATION IN THIRD-PARTY EVENTS

### 1. One Ocean Summit in Brest

Erik Orsenna lent his voice to rivers at the International *One Ocean Summit* organised by France in Brest. He intervened in the high-level session gathering around forty heads of state on 11 February.



## 2. World Water Forum

From 21 to 26 March 2022, the international water community met in Dakar (Senegal) for the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. Marie-Cécile Grisard represented IFGR at the forum and Erik Orsenna participated remotely with the organisation and participation in:

- **2 official sessions organised jointly with The Bridge Tank:**
  - Preservation of the Fouta Djallon Massif with the OMVS, OMVG, ABN, CEDEAO, Moroccan Coalition for Water, IUCN and UNECE;
  - Hydro-diplomacy with the OMVS, RIOB, Geneva Water Hub;



- **Participation in the “basin” segment driven by the RIOB and OMVS:** video recording with Erik Orsenna.

- **2 conferences at the French Pavilion:**

- Sentinel Rivers Programme of the Vigilife alliance with SPYGEN and CNR,
- Deltas and climate change with the Artois-Picardie Water Agency and the Direction of National Parks of Senegal.



## 3. Scientific assembly of the AISH

IFGR was convened to the 11<sup>th</sup> Scientific Assembly of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) combined with the Euro-Mediterranean-Africa Water Week, organised by the International Centre for Water Cooperation - UNESCO at Montpellier, on 30 and 31 May, with:

- the participation of IFGR in the scientific jury of the international final of a **hackaton** which saw the high school pupils of several countries challenge each other to propose innovations and risks relating to water.
- **a conference for the general public** given by Erik Orsenna and exchanges with young professionals in the water sector on the theme *Rivers and climate change: how to imagine a new future?* (more than 200 spectators).
- **a meeting with Abou Amani**, director of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, in the framework of IFGR's candidacy as a partner NGO.



## 4. IS Rivers

Erik Orsenna intervened during the opening session of the 4<sup>th</sup> I.S. (Interactive Sciences) Rivers International Conference in Lyon on 5 July, organised by the GRAIE.



## PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL COALITIONS

IFGR participated in different national and international coalitions to give a voice to rivers and permit, through its multidisciplinary and international approach and the practical case of rivers, making the link between the intertwined challenges of climate, water, biodiversity and health.



In 2022, it extended its presence to the **French Committee of the IUCN** (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) after having been admitted in 2021 as a new member of the international IUCN. Moreover, Erik Orsenna participated alongside the new Secretary of State for Biodiversity at its annual congress.



As a reminder, IFGR is also present in:

- **Water: French Partnership for Water; World Water Council; Internationale Water and Climate Coalition**, in the framework of its partnership with the WMO (World Meteorological Organisation), which provides the secretariat.
- **Health: OSH Forum (One Sustainable Health Forum).**
- **Biodiversity:** besides the IUCN, IFGR also participates in the project of the Vigilife alliance, in its Sentinel Rivers programme.

## DONATIONS RECEIVED

On 21 July, IFGR received a donation of **five hundred thousand euros (€500,000)** paid by CNR for the year 2022, in the framework of the partnership agreement 2021-2025 signed between CNR and IFGR on 14 December 2020.

It also signed an agreement **for a subsidy of twenty thousand euros (€20,000) from the General Secretariat for Regional Affairs and ten thousand euros (€10,000) from the Rhone-Mediterranean-Corsica Water Agency** for organising the event *Living with Rivers* on 27 October.

It also benefited from a **guaranteed advance for all the royalties transferred amounting to the total sum of fifty-five thousand euros (€55,000) from the publishing house Fayard**, divided into two payments: one on the signature of the contract (June) and the other on the publication of the work *The Thirsty Earth* (September).

Lastly, the Association received the total amount of **€2,463** by way of subscriptions from its members.

The Association perfectly managed the budget devoted to *Living with Rivers*, in conformity with the commitments made at the management Board meeting, and benefited from new financial receipts.

It therefore ended the year with a total amount of **€587,468** spent for **€587 468** of receipts. The share of non-consumed subsidies amounting to **€55,942** was paid into a reserve fund which now stands at **€417,672**.

## POST-CLOSURE EVENTS

There is no major event to report for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2023.

The amount of money owed to suppliers (invoices not received by 31/12/2022) was reduced by €5,000.

Date: 15 May 2023

*The President  
Mr Erik Orsenna*