

Association Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Fiscal year 2024

Preamble

The year 2024 has definitively marked a new strategic direction for the association. In recent years, IAGF has indeed wished to **strengthen its concrete impact in the territories, in support of projects and initiatives carried out by the territory's stakeholders and in the service of civil society.**

Reflection and in-depth work have been carried out since 2023, which has borne fruit in 2024, with the launch of two new tools:

1. **The River Puzzle Workshop** (a tool for leading group workshops for the general public, companies and local authorities)
2. **The Living with Rivers Label**, which promotes virtuous initiatives for rivers.

These two initiatives have made even more concrete the convictions acquired by our members for more than 10 years, for a sustainable future for all.

In parallel with these "awareness" and "promotion" axes, IAGF has continued its mobilization on the other strategic axes of the association:

3. **The animation of a network of members and partners**, focused on the sharing of experiences and recommendations. The IAGF 2024 session was organised in the Camargue in October 2024, in partnership with the territory's stakeholders.
4. **Advocacy**, including a mission in Fouta Djallon, as well as other interventions and collaborations in various events. New actions to animate the Plastic-Free River Charter have also been carried out in the Loire Basin, thanks to the support of the Loire Bretagne Water Agency.

These actions, in the continuity of those that have been the DNA of the association for nearly 10 years, mark our desire to always be more concrete, for ever more impacts.

We are very proud of this year's achievements, and of the ever-renewed support of our expert members, institutional and financial partners.

Expertise and dialogue

1. Member Network

IAGF has continued to develop and consolidate its network of experts

1. New members have joined the association, with expertise and diversified territories. The updated list of members for 2024 is appended to this document.
2. Regular meetings have made it possible to animate our committee of experts, around thematic working groups

A more global reflection on the development of experts (in France and internationally) has been initiated, in order to identify and welcome new members to strengthen our multidisciplinary expertise.

3. Members' session in Camargue, October 2024

IAGF wanted to reposition its annual international sessions, to make them part of a longer-term reflection, in "project" mode.

Thus, IAGF has chosen to focus the 2023, 2024 and 2025 sessions on a targeted theme: deltas.

3 deltas have been targeted to host the annual IAGF territorial dialogues:

4. **2023: Bengal Delta** (Brahmaputra River and Ganges), Bangladesh
5. **2024: Rhône Delta (with a focus on other emblematic European and Mediterranean deltas)**
6. **2025: Mouth of the Amazon** (Manaus and Belém)

This work will support the association's advocacy actions (in particular at COP30 in 2025 in Belém).

The session on the Rhône delta in October 2024, organised with the support of various partners, was an opportunity to understand the challenges of the Camargue in the face of soil salinisation and rising sea levels, current markers of climate change.

Through various exchanges with territorial actors (institutional, political, socio-economic, artistic and cultural), our experts were able to better understand the development trajectories of this changing territory, and the different local approaches envisaged.

A public presentation was organised at the Arles City Hall, in the presence of various partners in the territory and our experts.

It was an opportunity to address issues related to adaptation strategies not only in the Camargue but also in other deltas around the world.

A highlight of our trip to the Camargue is available in our December 2024 Mag' des rivières, accessible [here](#).



Following our annual sessions, various working groups have been mobilised within our network of members, to give a concrete follow-up, in "project" mode, and thus contribute, at our level, to thinking differently about territorial projects.

"Ambassadors" have been appointed among our members, to ensure close follow-up with the actors met in the territories.

1. Partnerships

After being recognized in 2024 as an "Official Partner Association of UNESCO – consultative status", IAGF has continued to consolidate its network of partners:

1. IUCN (France and international)
2. PFE – French Water Partnership.
3. World Water Council
4. World Meteorological Organization
5. One Sustainable Health
6. Tara Ocean
7. Fondation de la Mer

A new partnership with the Water Academy was signed in 2024.

Discussions on cross-actions are also underway with many players, in France and internationally.

IAGF participated in the INBO ([International Network of Basin Organizations](#)) event in Bordeaux in October 2024.

Advocacy and cooperation

1. Visit to Guinea, to the sources of the Senegal, Gambia and Niger rivers

Our association has been convinced for many years that one of the major challenges for the sustainable future of rivers is the protection of springs and deltas, which are the most sensitive to climatic and human pressures.

One of the priorities for action identified by the association is the protection of the Fouta Djallon massif, the source of the major African rivers (Senegal, Niger, Gambia in particular), on which 300 million people depend.

Numerous awareness-raising actions have already been carried out by IAGF (Dakar Forum in 2022, New York Conference in 2023 in particular), alongside various local and international stakeholders.

In order to identify new partners and consider new cooperation projects, IAGF carried out a mission to Guinea, in partnership with the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), in the Fouta Djallon massif.

Various stakeholders were met by the delegation: Ministries of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Energy, Hydraulics and Hydrocarbons, ECOWAS, local governors, France and EU embassies, French Development Agency, local NGOs, academics, village communities etc...

Visits to local NGOs made it possible to understand the obstacles and levers to effective actions on the ground to safeguard the massif.

This mission made it possible to identify not only the urgency of action but also the need for greater coordination between actors, better monitoring over time of the actions carried out (to analyse good practices or difficulties), and the mobilisation of better targeted funding that is directly effective in the field.

Examples of priority actions:

1. training in new agricultural practices avoiding the wandering of animals and deforestation, more protective of the soil (to avoid erosion which endangers the sources of the massif)
2. creation of sustainable sectors that are remunerative for the population, with contracted outlets (public, private)
3. development of new energy sources (to limit deforestation for firewood),
4. raising awareness among the population, from an early age, of the challenges of protecting rivers and springheads.

1. global support for more sustainable practices for essential economic activities (mining, textiles, brick manufacturing for construction, etc.) that impact the quality of rivers and streams.

A Rivers Mag' dedicated to the Fouta Djallon Massif has been published and distributed as a follow-up to this mission, accessible [here](#). Our association will continue to mobilize on this essential issue that is the protection of the Fouta Djallon massif, and is reflecting on the most relevant positioning, alongside local actors and international coalitions and at the service of private and public donors.



1. **"Plastic-free river" charter**

IAFM has continued the "Plastic-Free River Charter" initiative, launched in 2020 with **the Tara Ocean Foundation and CNR**, which brings together local authorities (170 communities) around the objective of fighting against plastic pollution.

New supports have been created:

1. Testimonial videos from local authorities, to be found [here](#):
2. [A "Plastic-free games" webinar in September 2024. Find it here](#)

Participation in many events was carried out by the partners.

All these elements can be found on:

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

A more global reflection was undertaken in 2023 by the Steering Committee to better support local authorities in their action plans.

The financial support of the Loire Bretagne Water Agency, to deploy this charter at the scale of the Loire basin, has made it possible in 2024 to strengthen our support for local authorities, in conjunction with other partners in the territory (OIEAU, GRET).

Thus, a new service offer is offered to the communities of the Loire Bretagne territory:

3. Facilitation of awareness workshops
4. Highlighting "plastic-free" actions by local authorities (videos, events)
5. Webinar or conference to share the obstacles and levers for reducing plastic in the territories.

These actions will continue until 2026.

6. Research project "The recognition of the legal personality of watercourses as a tool for transboundary water governance?".

Since 2023, IAGF has been supporting a thesis entitled "The recognition of the legal personality of watercourses as a tool for transboundary water governance?".

This research project is the subject of the thesis work of Mr. Cyrille Vallet carried out under the co-supervision and co-direction under the aegis of the University of Lyon and the University of Geneva (UNIGE) with the support of the Rhône Mediterranean Corsica Water Agency.

IAGF has joined the research consortium and co-funded the thesis.

IAGF also participated in the event " [What if the Seine had rights](#)" organized in Paris in December 2024, and in a high-level conference at the Paris City Hall, which will launch an ambitious mobilization around these topics in 2025.

IAGF wishes to better understand the obstacles and levers of legal personality recognition, through French examples (the Rhône, Loire and Seine are particularly targeted) and international examples, and to analyze the advantages, disadvantages and operability.

Sensibilisation & Education

1. Mag' of rivers

Since 2023, IAGF has evolved its newsletter towards a more digital format and more adapted to new media and citizens' expectations.

This new quarterly magazine, entitled "**Mag' des fleuves**" includes both a thematic file but also news on the world's rivers or on the projects of the association and its partners with video testimonies.

Find the 4 issues 2024 [here](#)



1. New! The Fresco of the Rivers

In 2024, IAGF launched a new awareness-raising tool, allowing an appropriation of river issues through collaborative workshops.

Inspired by the success of the Climate Fresco and other thematic frescoes developed since then, the Rivers Fresco was co-created with the Eau'dyssée association, an association that developed the Water Fresco in 2020.

A trademark "Fresco of the Rivers" has been registered with the INPI (National Institute of Industrial Property).

This new tool consists of several workshops (2h30 in total):

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2. The different uses of rivers and the impact of human activities on them,
3. Individual and collective solutions for a more sustainable management of rivers.

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River extensions have also been developed with the support of local partners: the Rhône, the Seine and the Loire.

International extensions are being considered with partners.

These workshops take place face-to-face or remotely.

100 people have already been trained in 2024.

More than 150 are already registered for 2025.

The formation of a network of volunteer animators (most of whom are already animators of the Water Fresco) is being prepared for 2025 in order to deploy the fresco throughout France.

Our team will also carry out activities with committed companies that wish to mobilize their employees around the issue of rivers.

A reflection on a format for schoolchildren is underway, with the support of primary school teachers, teachers, the OFB and the National Education.



1. Partner events

IAGF has been involved in various partner events in 2024:

1. [The Festival of the Camargue and the Rhône Delta](#), Port-St-Louis du Rhône, May 2024
2. [The "Entre Rhône et Saône" Festival](#), Lyon, June-July 2024
3. The 35th Rhône Festival, in Monthey (Switzerland), in September 2024
4. A conference organised by the Lake Geneva Water Cluster "Feet in the water, head in space", in Evian in November 2024.
5. A River and Health conference, organized as part of the inauguration of the WHO Academy in Lyon, in December 2024 (in partnership with the CNR, the RMC Water Agency, the Hospices civils de Lyon, Science Po Lyon and the One Health Foundation).



Erik Orsenna, the president of our association, has spoken at various conferences and events throughout the year 2024, in France, Europe and internationally, to raise awareness of the issue of water resources and rivers, and to encourage a more sustainable and balanced management of ecosystems.



Solutions in the territories

1. New! *Living with Rivers* label



A working group of experts was mobilised in November 2023 to propose a global framework to best support virtuous projects for rivers in the territories.

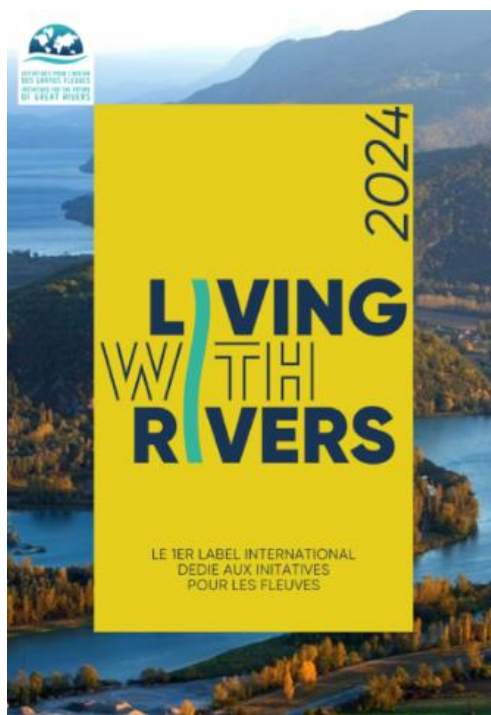
This working group resulted in the "Living with Rivers" label.

This new tool marked an important turning point for our association at the service of project

leaders in the territories.

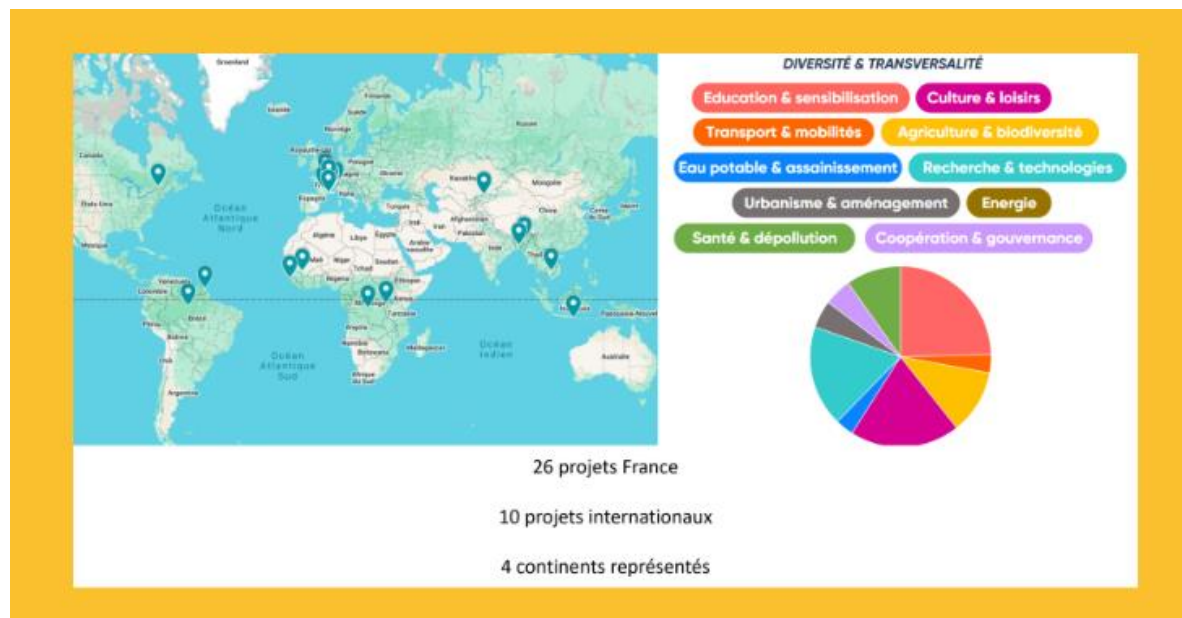
Launched in March 2024, it allows stakeholders involved in a river or a river/watershed to promote their projects, once selected by a jury of experts.

A call for applications, launched in the 1st quarter of 2024, received a significant response, in France and internationally, with 50 applications received. 36 projects have been labelled, which can be found here:



[List of the 36 projects labelled in 2024](#)

These projects are very diverse in nature, which reflects the multidisciplinary approach of our association:



3 projects specifically caught the attention of our jury and received the "Living with Rivers 2024" prize (endowment of 15,000 euros per project).

- l'association **Sungaï Watch** sur la rivière Bekasi en Indonésie
- l'association **WWF Guyane** sur le fleuve Maroni en Guyane
- l'association **Karama** sur le fleuve Niger au Mali



Find the testimonials of the winners [here](#)

Beyond the labeling, a new community has emerged, interested in sharing good practices, expertise, ideas and difficulties. Indeed, if rivers are all different around the world, the problems they encounter or the useful solutions to preserve them are often similar. The experience of some inspires others!

We are very pleased that our association can thus be a useful interface for solution providers in the territories.

Our ambition is also to draw the attention of patrons to these beautiful projects, to give them a boost.

A new call for projects will be launched at the beginning of 2025.

Operational Management of the Association

1. Life of the association

Team of employees

Since 2022, the team has been strengthened with three new recruitments, in order to make the association more operational and allow it to deploy new projects:

1. Sophie Gardette, who arrived as Director in November 2022.
2. Jessica Bergstein Collay, who joined as project manager for communication, events and project development, in September 2023
3. Marine Excoffier, who arrived as a "Fresque" project manager, in November 2023.

This new team took full possession of its missions in 2024 and will continue its actions in 2025, with the support of our Secretary General, Clémence Aubert (in office since July 2022).

Board of Directors and General Assembly

IAGF held 2 Boards of Directors in 2024, in the presence of the directors.

The General Assembly was held on 24 June (hybrid format), in the presence of the members of the Members' Network and the External Auditor.

The minutes of our various meetings can be found on our website.

4. Activity of the Fonds Avenir des Grands Fleuves

The association created this endowment fund in July 2021 to associate its actions and welcome private sponsors into its governance.

This fund became active in 2022 with the **initial endowment paid by the IAGF founder** in the amount of €15,000 and the arrival of a first sponsor, **the Vicat Group, as a Benefactor**

Member, with support of €20,000 per year over three years (agreement signed on April 5, 2022), i.e. 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Thank you to our partners:



The Avenir des Grands Fleuves fund was redirected in 2024 to support the new "Living with Rivers" label, to support regional projects.

A whole new strategy is being prepared to strengthen the attractiveness of our endowment fund for private sponsors.

1. Budget and Donations Received

IAGF has received a **donation of five hundred thousand euros (€500,000)** paid by CNR for the 2024 financial year as part of the 2021-2025 partnership agreement signed between CNR and IAGF on December 14, 2020.

The Association has signed a **multi-year agreement with the Loire Bretagne Water Agency**, with a prorated amount **over 2024 of €13,257.50**.

Finally, the Association received a total amount of **€3,500** in membership fees from its members.

The Association has perfectly controlled the budget. It therefore closes the year with a total amount of **€546,641 in expenses** for **€663,689 in revenue**. The balance **of €117,048** was paid into the **reserve fund, which is now set at €810,394**.

The association was also able to invest its cash flow, in order to take advantage of the advantageous rates, with investment products for **the year 2024 of €25,518**.

Finally, the CNR's support for skills sponsorship amounts to **€2016** (support from support services in accounting and management, legal and finance).

The financial health of the association and its prospects for the development of sponsorship allow it to look forward to the coming years with serenity, and thus to continue the deployment of its new strategy.

POST-CLOSING EVENTS

There are no major events to list in the 1st quarter of 2025.

Date: April 9, 2025

*Le Président
Monsieur Erik Orsenna*