

Continuity, continuum, corridor, connectivity

In France, the notion of ecological continuity was first used in the Water Framework Directive for the preservation and restoration of aquatic environments, then transposed to terrestrial environments to designate both the biodiversity reservoirs and the corridors making up the green and blue framework. It corresponds to all environments that are sufficiently well-connected to be used by species to carry out their life cycle. The term "ecological continuity" thus refers to the same definition as "ecological network", but it belongs more to the political and operational domain, whereas the latter is used in the scientific field. Some planning documents use the expression "ecological continuum", which refers to the same idea. The term "corridor", on the other hand, refers to one of the elements making up these ecological continuities/continuums/networks: environments too small or too narrow to be habitats and used by species to move around. Connectivity is different from the previous terms, in that it does not refer to landscape elements, but to a property of the landscape that describes its greater or lesser permeability to the movement of organisms.

Focus image. The Brahmaputra as seen by the SPOT satellite. [Source: Cnes - Spot Image, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons]

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