Policy implementation challenges to mainstreaming river restoration

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Restoring Europe’s Rivers
River restoration status and priorities
The state of European rivers

More than half of the surface water bodies in Europe are in less than good ecological status or potential.

Rivers and transitional waters are reported to have worse ecological status or potential and more pressures and impacts than water bodies in lakes and coastal waters.
• Solutions are needed at scale

• Multiple drivers need integrated solutions

• Multi-benefit measures are needed to improve ecosystem health

River restoration is a key approach
River restoration in Europe: where are we?

- Historically single site, single funder and single policy driven
  - Narrower range of benefits
  - Smaller scale of impact

- More recently increasing landscape scale approaches
  - Multiple benefits
  - Experiences biased to northern and western Europe
Policy drivers and opportunities
WFD
*Updated River Basin Management Plans* in 2015 require an integrated approach across policy areas

FRMD
*Flood risk management plans* to be adopted in 2015

CAP
*Reform*: Green Pillar I to support Natural Water Retention Measures through ecological focus areas.

**Habitats Directive, Birds Directive**

**Other EU objectives**
Natura 2000, energy, transport, …
EU Green Infrastructure Communication

- Sustainable growth in Europe

- Solutions for Climate Change and disaster risk reduction

- EU will
  - develop technical guidance and a strategy
  - Establish research priorities
  - Improve access to finance (EIB)
**EU Water Blueprint Communication**

- **Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM)**
  - Reduce vulnerability to floods and droughts

- **Agricultural buffers**

- **Environmental flows**
  - Maintain and restore ecosystems and their service provision

- **EU will**
  - Develop natural water retention measures guidance by 2014
  - Develop ecological flows guidance by 2014
  - Promote implementation in RBMP planning cycle
Objectives of NWRM Pilot Project

1. Build the knowledge base on NWRM:
   • knowledge available data and information,
   • best practices on the current applications of NWRM

2. Assessment of effectiveness, costs and benefits of NWRM

3. Develop and maintain a catalogue of measures and case studies
   • Database associated with WISE

4. Promote knowledge and best practice exchange

5. Identify or create operational tools
   • use at national, river basin, and/or local level
   • to facilitate inclusion of NWRM in the 2nd or 3rd RBMPs and FRMPs.
Policy Implementation Challenges
Make the case

• Political case at the relevant scale
  – Raise awareness of opportunities and benefits
  – Share achievements

• Business case
  – What is in it for me and why is this effective?
  – Different actors and sectors

➢ Demonstrate the economic case
  – Socio-economic valuation
  – Cost benefit analyses

➢ Set targets and show impact
  – Monitoring and evaluation
Financing

• From ‘nice to do’ to mainstream investment at scale
  – Stimulate and mainstream innovative approaches
  – Upscale PES
  – Private sector engagement
  – Ensure continuity

• Joined up thinking between finance streams
  – Align different EU sectoral finance streams

• Increase absorption capacity
Policy implementation

• Integrate
  – Integrate to reflect watershed processes
  – Focus measures on drivers
  – Makes measures integrative
  – Establish (inter)sectoral platforms
  – Align timescales
  – Across borders

• Up-scale and support tool implementation, e.g.
  – River contracts
  – Water stewardship

• Underpin with improved research; e.g. Morphology and fish passages
Implementation capacity

- Stronger knowledge base
  - Consistent comparable data (design and construction)
  - Best practices

- Reinforce and stimulate technical & practitioner networks
  - Supporting ‘grass-roots’ implementation; River Trusts, expert networks
  - Stimulating planners and landscape architects

- Guidance manuals and tools
  - Translation of concepts, e.g. ecosystem services
  - Socio-economic valuation
  - Integrative tools, e.g. River contracts
  - Participatory approaches
• What are the challenges to achieving policy implementation that mainstreams river restoration at scale?

• What are the solutions, how can they be reached and by who?