Taking river restoration forward

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Restoring Europe’s Rivers
Status of river restoration in Europe

• 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
EU Green Infrastructure Communication

- Sustainable growth in Europe
- Solutions for Climate Change and disaster risk reduction
- Natural capital
  - Water
  - Nature Conservation
- EU will
  - develop technical guidance and a strategy
  - Establish research priorities
  - Improve access to finance (EIB)
EU Water Blueprint Communication

• Water retention zones
  – Mitigate pressure from land and water (flood protection) development
  – Reduce vulnerability to floods and droughts

• 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
Challenges

• Scale, interconnectivity and interdependency
  – need for a minimum consistency

• Integration into policy areas
  – across policy areas (agriculture, aquaculture, energy, transport and disaster management)

• Consistent reliable data
  – Ecosystem data

• Improved knowledge base
  – Valuation
  – Understanding
  – Innovation

• Financial support
Updated River Basin Management Plans in 2015 require an integrated approach across policy areas

Flood risk management plans to be adopted in 2015

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

Other EU objectives - water quality, Natura 2000, energy, transport, biodiversity...
How to implement?

• Are these the best soft and hard policy drivers?

• What are the priority actions that can make a difference to their implementation? E.g.
  – Influence financing
  – Policy Integration
  – Knowledge development
  – Awareness raising
• What do we want to see? – Need a statement to work from. Use the EU biodiversity strategy figure?

• What are the key opportunities to bring RR into the mainstream

• What are the main challenges /barriers? [Summary from Jenny]

• What needs to happen to overcome them?

• How and by who?

• WFD Blueprint workplan – Natural Water Retention measures
Overcoming barriers: scaling up

Limited size and scope most single sector objectives, e.g. for species or fisheries.

Smaller scale projects could be even more successful. River restoration needs to:
• Operate at a broader, landscape level
• Take into account and enable synergy between different EU Directives
• Pursue follow-up of good examples; too many places where sectoral approaches are still applied.
• EU LIFE and Interreg. have provided resources, but evaluations, lessons learnt and magnification mechanisms are inadequate.

Examples of EU funded restoration projects:

<table>
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<th>Count of Project</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>LIFE</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
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<td>Species conservation and management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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Lack of evidence base that good ecological status/potential is being achieved.

How to measure multiple benefits achieved by river restoration?

Single measures outcomes – quality and quantity – are easier to measure.

- How to measure ecosystem services?
- How could effective targets be set at the RB level?
- What kinds of incentive approaches might be practical/ effective?
- What kinds of technical guidance are needed?
Financing

• How to provide cost effective delivery of river restoration projects?

• River restoration mostly seen as ‘nice to do’ rather than required under many directives.

• Finance for green infrastructure development could come from a number of sources including Interreg, Regional Development Funds, agri-environment, etc.

• Rural development and agri-environment currently not delivering joined-up river and wetland restoration.

• How to make payments and funding ‘smarter’ in terms of ensuring that payment will help with river and floodplain restoration?

• Are there new solutions that reconcile environmental and economic interests?