

WS 5 - Challenges to stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes in river restoration in Europe

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Open workshop with invited panelists: Specific persons to be confirmed. It is planned that we will have at least four presentations, two each from a government and civil society representative. These will be drawn from a Western and Eastern European (probably Ukraine) country. The speakers will then comprise a panel for discussion.

Description:

River restoration requires the engagement of the interests of many stakeholders at different levels - national, regional, local - which operate along river valleys or even throughout the whole basin. The differing interests of stakeholders related to water resources and land use can lead to conflicts of interest in relation to river conservation. It is important to find an effective mechanism(s) to agree a common vision in a river restoration project and to find a balance between the different public and private sector interests and national/international conservation priorities. In Western Europe there is relatively a wealth of experience of these types of engagement and many lessons to learn. In Central and Eastern Europe these experiences are much less and in some cases practically non-existent. As the implementation of key EU legislation spreads further east in its implementation and as non-EU states begin to grapple with their basin focused water management policies, the need for tools and practices in the field of stakeholder participation is growing. There is a need to learn from the good and bad practices that have been experienced and consider to what extent they apply elsewhere in Europe. This workshop will consider the different opportunities and approaches for stakeholder engagement in the decision-making processes in different parts of Europe. Four presentations considering river restoration in basins in Western and Eastern Europe will be made highlighting lessons learned and where the current state of the art lies. A panel, comprising the presenters will then kick off a facilitated discussion that will then be opened out to the plenary to respond to. These discussions will seek to distil the most appropriate best practices for engaging stakeholders in river restoration that can be translated to different areas of Europe.