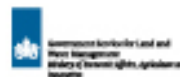
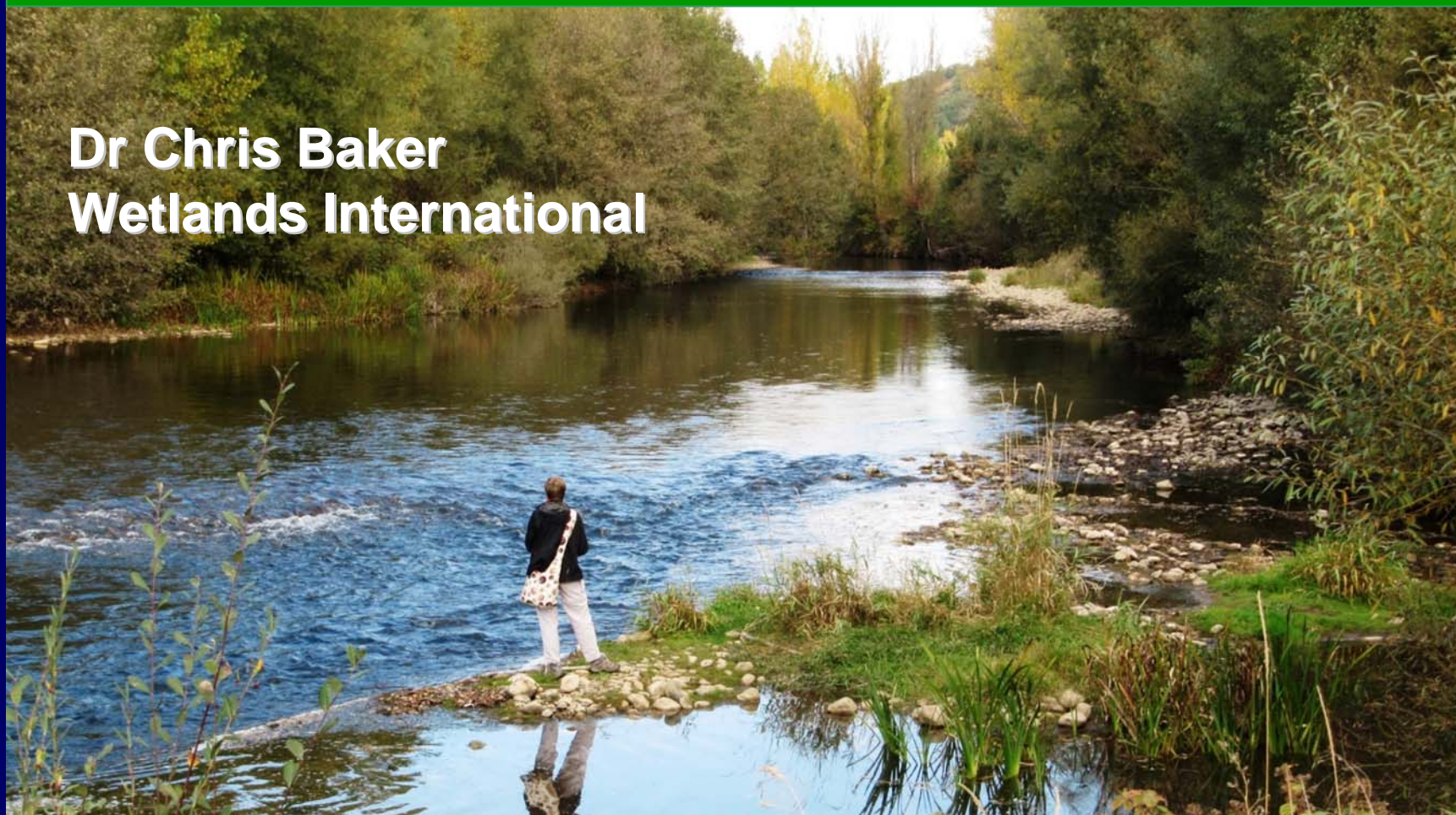


# Policy implementation challenges to mainstreaming river restoration

**Dr Chris Baker**  
**Wetlands International**



## Restoring Europe's Rivers



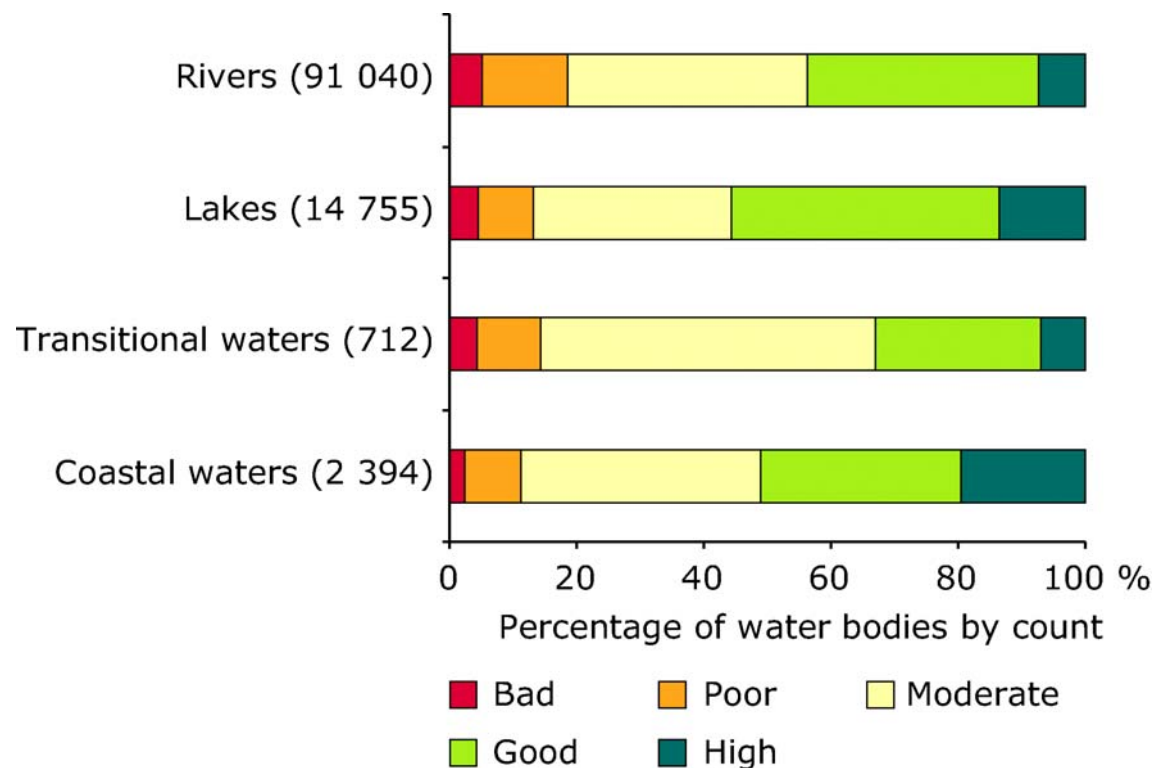
An aerial photograph showing a river restoration project. The river flows through a landscape of green fields and dense trees. In the background, a town and hills are visible under a clear sky. The river has a wide, shallow channel with some exposed gravel bars and small islands of vegetation.

# 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



# Policy Drivers

## **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.

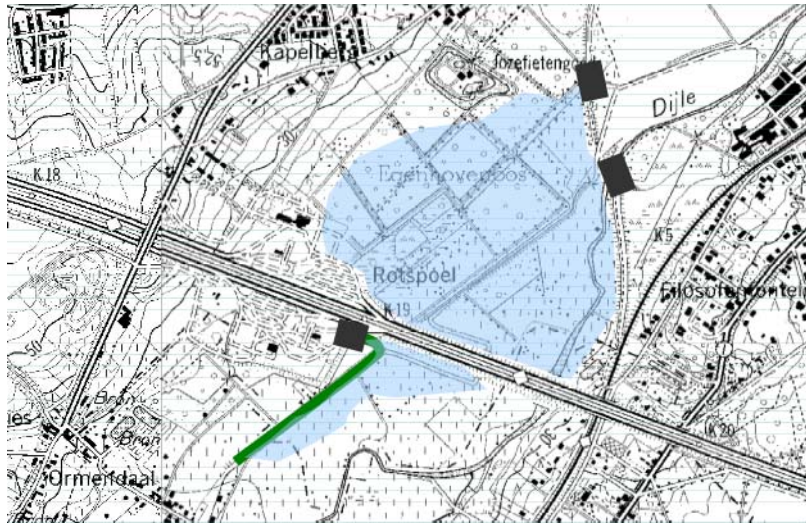
**Habitats Directive, Birds Directive**

## **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 knowledgebase
  - 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?