

Restoring Europe's Rivers

RESTORE Events: Reporting

Workshop: River Restoration – an important activity in
the field of water management

8 November 2012

RUSE

Bulgaria

LIFE 09INF/UK/000032

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Event Details

The National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management (NIHWM), Romania organized the International Workshop „**River Restoration – an important activity in water management field**” in the framework of the *RESTORE Project (Rivers: Engaging, Supporting and Transferring knOwledge for Restoration in Europe)* application no. LIFE09 INF/UK/000032.

The workshop was organized with the support of DLG, the Government Service for Land and Water Management in The Netherlands on the 8th of November 2012, and was held in Ruse, Bulgaria.

Within the Workshop a Round Table – **Strategies to reach policymakers in East European Region** took place.

Invited speakers from The Netherlands, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria presented within the workshop.

The workshop was a sector specific engagement event directed to the Main Target Audience (policy makers and river basin managers) of the RESTORE project in East European region. Attendees were mainly Policy makers and River Basin Planners from several East and Central East European countries (**appendix A**: List of attendees).

Objectives of the Event:

- To find and identify methods and means to influence the policy makers in order to accept and put into practice RR works in correlation with infrastructure of flood protection, hydropower plants, etc.
- To develop a strategy to reach and stimulate policymakers to implement the Directives in a way that the new way of thinking about river restoration can be improved.

Programme of the Event:

The event had a mixture of presentations and a round table. The detailed programme can be seen in the event programme (see **Appendix B**).

The event started with an introduction of NIHWM and its relation to river restoration and RESTORE-project. After a general introduction of the RESTORE-project it was followed by several presentations on RR in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania and a presentation on *Strategies to reach policymakers in East European Region; Experiences in the Meander Project in Croatia* as opening for the round table.

Key Issues from Event

Key issues on Romanian presentation on RR

Mrs. ing. Elisabeta Cserwid - Regional Communications Assistant for Eastern European Region within RESTORE project from National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management gave a talk on **the**

organization of River Restoration in Romania within European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR).

Romania is founding member of ECRR which was set up in 1999. National Administration "Apele Romane" (ANAR) is a member in the Board Council of the ECRR The Romanian Centre of River Restoration (RCRR) and is an entity established by law. The RCRR has developed several activities during its existence (since 2001).

Prof. dr. eng. Vladimir Rojanschi – Counsellor – at Ecological University of Bucharest gave a talk on ***River restoration – part of National Biodiversity Strategy.*** The key issue was that in Romania a **National Strategy and an Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation in Romania, for the period 2011-2020** was developed and is now in the process of implementation.

Key issues on Bulgarian presentation on RR

Mr. Vasil Uzunov - Regional Communications Assistant for Bulgaria gave an introduction on ***the River Restoration in Bulgaria – responsible institutions, projects and problems.*** The main obstacles and problems are itemed below:

- bias of hydraulic engineers in Bulgaria(old engineering)
- highly fragmented private ownership in Bulgaria
- lack of funds for implementing RR projects
- low priority in the political agenda
- No incentives for implementation RR projects
- Municipalities alone can not prepare project proposals due to lack of capacity(cooperation with NGO)

Key issues on Hungarian presentation on RR

Mrs. Ágnes György, Regional Communications Assistant for Hungary ***presented River Restoration in Hungary.*** She highlighted some problems related to restoration projects as follows:

- Priorities are not well-established
- Insufficient information support
- Insufficient and non-effective communication
- Different time spans
- Lack of belief in success
- Subtle, ambiguous legal regulation
- Complicate bureaucracy
- Lack of funds
- Unclear, divided, private land ownership
- Lack of experience
- Lack of monitoring after implementation

Key issues on Mr. W. P. C. Zeeman, DLG – The Netherlands presentation

Mr. W.P.C.Zeeman from DLG – The Netherlands gave a talk on ***Strategies to reach policymakers in East European Region; Experiences in the Meander Project in Croatia.*** "A process of raising awareness of RR in wider circles".

In order to harmonise Croatia on practises to EU legislation and to keep up with EU standards about hydro morphological monitoring two main results were aimed at:

1. develop principles, an implementation strategy and a guide for hydromorphological monitoring;

2. develop a guide for making RR-plans;

Experiences of “raising awareness” in this Croatian project lead to the following recommendations:

- talking about necessity of RR in wider – growing circles around the project team
 - funding and partner organisations;
 - representatives of policymakers and partners, e.g. in Steering Committee;
 - high level managers of rural - and river planning and scientific world;
- identifying relevant stakeholders and their various positions
- marking relevant moments to reach certain stakeholders in several phases of the project
- using various publicity tools for special target groups



Key issue and outcomes of the Round table on the RESTORE-project

Ms. Caroline Schrandt, DLG – the RESTORE-project-partner from the Netherlands, presented the Round Table ***Strategies to reach policymakers in East European Region***. Her key-issue was to make sure that all attendees contributed to develop a strategy or building blocs for that in order to reach policy makers within East European Region.

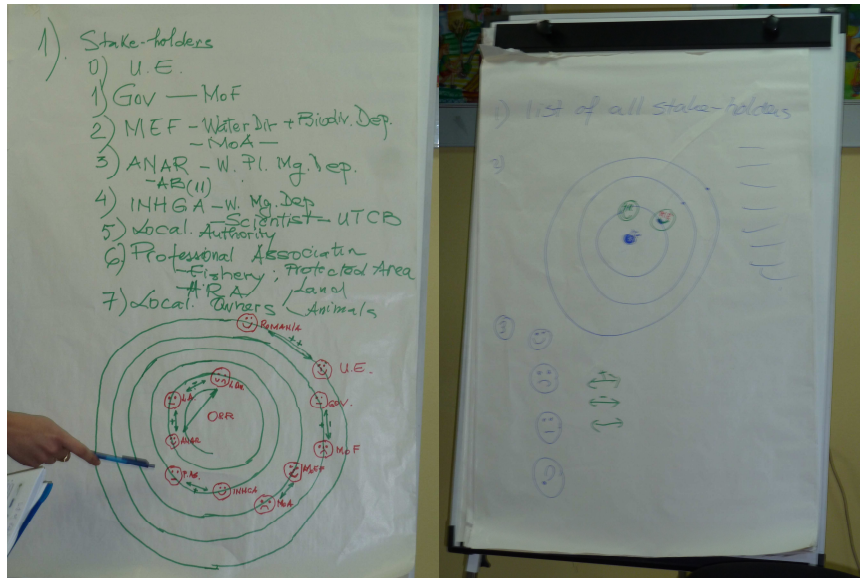
The Round table was organised in 2 steps:

1. Stakeholder analysis
2. Strategy – action plan to reach policy makers

For the first step, the participants made a list of stakeholders, a prioritization of them (how far or close are they from the objective – river restoration and the responsible organisation) what is their influence on decision making, their attitude to the issue and the relationships among them.. There were 3 working groups (Romania; Bulgaria; Croatia and Hungary). In the end a representative of each group presented to the others the work that was done.

Working groups





In the second step, as long term perspective, the following question was asked and answered in the Round Table:

Question:

What do you see would result in the biggest win for river restoration in your country?

Answers:

- Create more space for flood protection and nature
- "More space for river" – flood protection, diversity of ecosystems, more species
- Irrigation system to stop construction dikes outside settlements
- Farmers agree to use their land for river restoration
- Solved problems with for ex. WWTP
- Having good plan for activities
- Increased awareness – through media (especially TV) and education
- Better education
- Education in general
- Education of engineers on more holistic approach on flood protection
- More budget, large-scale interventions
- Not enough knowledge how to do RR; not enough educated people, money, other priorities (WWTP)
- Ministry of Finance to understand the importance of RR
- State politics for RR and measures for implementation of this politics
- Revitalization of part of nature; return to some initial functions of rivers (habitat for birds and fishes); longitudinal and lateral continuity
- Ecosystem protection
- More species
- Space for biodiversity and finally improvement of life

After defining the long term perspective, a start was made with generating actions for the next year and further . In the end of the round table, each group presented an action plan for implementation of RR activities.

Key Outcomes

The most important outcomes are

- RESTORE project is a partnership for sharing and transferring knowledge.
- The RESTORE-events (36, of which this workshop is one of them) are meant to be opportunities to share knowledge, but also learning to know each other.
- Methods and means to influence the policy makers in order to accept and put into practice RR works in correlation with infrastructure of flood protection, hydropower plants, etc.
- Knowledge how to develop a strategy to reach policymakers in East European Region.
- The answers from the [Feedback Forms: RESTORE Workshop](#) can be considered **as second round to the question asked during the workshop**. A synthesis of the answers is shown in the **appendix C**.

Attendance

16 People attended the workshop from 5 different countries: policy makers , scientists and river basin planners.

Support for restoration Practices

The event supports RR practice across Europe, mainly Central and East part, in a great extend. The participants to the workshop were mainly Policy makers and River Basin Planners which took home:

- Ideas and examples of methods and means to influence the policy makers in their country, in order to accept and put into practice RR works in correlation with infrastructure of flood protection, hydropower plants, etc.
- Building blocks that can help develop a strategy to reach and stimulate policymakers to implement the Directives in a way that the new way of thinking about river restoration can be improved.

Building on Network Capacity

The workshop was also a good opportunity for new contacts, renewing existing contacts and generating ideas about building a national platform for RR in Bulgaria and Hungary and generate ideas how the platforms in these countries and Romania can be helpful to improve RR.

Promoting effective Knowledge Transfer

The event promoted an effective River Restoration knowledge transfer within East and Central European Region.

Dissemination of Event Outcomes

The power point presentations will be posted on the RESTORE project web side. The attendees will disseminate the lessons learned to their colleagues from their organizations and of course will try to implement the strategic steps in their country.

Follow Up

Follow up of the event will be web disseminations and articles, in the next periods.

- An article will be written for the RESTORE November Bulletin;
- An article will be written by Wim Zeeman for the Magazine of the Ecological University of Bucharest;
- An article will be written by Prof. Rojanschi for ARA Revue



Annexes

Annex A: List of Attendees

Surname	First Name	Company	Country
Galie	Andreea	NIHWM	Romania
Cserwid	Elisabeta	NIHWM	Romania
Uzunov	Vasil		Bulgaria
Angelov	Mladen		Bulgaria
Gyorgy	Agnes Irma	Danube Research Institute Centre for Ecological Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences	Hungary
Zeeman	Wim	Secretariat European Centre for River Restoration, DLG	The Netherlands
Schrandt H.	Caroline	DLG	The Netherlands
Rojanschi	Vladimir	Ecological University - Bucharest	Romania
Harceag	Andreea	Representative of Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests	Romania
Popovici	Felicia	Representative of National Administration “Apele Romane”	Romania
Atanasova	Liliya	Regional Inspectorate of Environmental and Water – Ruse	Bulgaria
Dimitrov	Petar	Danube River Basin Directorate	Bulgaria
Ivanova	Svetla	West Aegean River Basin Directorate	Bulgaria
Nikolova	Magdalena	Black Sea River Basin Directorate	Bulgaria
Sikoronja	Marija	Water Croatia Institute	Croatia
Surmanovic	Dagmar	Water Croatia Institute	Croatia

Annex B



Restoring Europe's Rivers

RESTORE – WORKSHOP

“River Restoration – an important activity in water management field”

RUSE, Bulgaria, 8 November 2012

PROGRAM

Location:	Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water – Ruse, Town of Ruse, “Pridunavski Boulevard” № 20
9.30 – 10.00	Participants registration and welcoming (tea, coffee....)
10.00 – 10.10	Welcome on behalf of the Bulgarian Authorities - <i>Director of Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water, Ruse and the representative of the Ministry of Environment and Water from Bulgaria;</i>
10.10 – 10.30	Opening of the Workshop - <i>Mrs. dr. ing. Andreea Galie-NIHWM, Regional Communications Manager for Eastern European Region within RESTORE project, NIHWM, Romania and Mr. Wim P.C. Zeeman, Government Service for Land and Water management (DLG) – The Netherlands, Project Partner in RESTORE;</i>
10.30 – 10.40	Introduction to the topic of the Seminar - <i>Ms. Ir. Caroline H. Schrandt, DLG – The Netherlands</i> ¹
10.40 – 10.50	The organization of River Restoration in Romania within European Center for River Restoration - <i>Mrs. ing. Elisabeta Cserwid - Regional Communications Assistant for Eastern European Region within RESTORE project, NIHWM, Romania;</i>

10.50 – 11.00	The River Restoration in Bulgaria – responsible institutions, projects and problems – <i>Mr. Vasil Uzunov - Regional Communications Assistant for Bulgaria;</i>
11.00 – 11.10	River Restoration in Hungary – <i>Mrs. Ágnes György, Regional Communications Assistant for Hungary;</i>
11.10 - 11.20	River Restoration – part of Romanian National Biodiversity Strategy, <i>Prof dr. ing Vladimir Rojanschi, counselor, Ecological University of Bucharest;</i>
11.20 – 11.40	Strategies to reach policymakers in East European Region; Experiences in the Meander Project in Croatia - <i>Mr. W.P.C.Zeeman, DLG – The Netherlands;</i>
11.40 - 12.00	Discussions
12.00 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 15.30	Round Table – Brainstorm session -discussions – <i>Chairman: Ms. Caroline Schrandt, DLG – The Netherlands</i>
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee – break
16.00 – 16.30	Conclusions
17.00	Departure to Bucharest

(1) to find and identify methods and means to influence the policy makers in order to accept and put into practice RR works in correlation with infrastructure of flood protection, hydropower plants, etc. and

(2) To develop a strategy to reach and stimulate policymakers to implement the Directives in a way that the new way of thinking about river restoration can be improved.

Annex C

A synthesis of the answers to the questions asked in Feedback Forms: RESTORE Workshop

13 participants answered to the Feedback Forms: RESTORE Workshop.

How will the workshop change your river restoration working practices?

- To obtain a new and important information.
- I consider this workshop to represent an experience exchange between specialists regarding River Restoration.

I still don't know; definitely for the better with more enthusiasm

- The workshop offered an opportunity to have a larger view about river restoration in different countries (approaches, problems).

A little extend.

- I gained a holistic view.
- I got some knowledge about the best practices in countries involved in the East Region of Europe
covering Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Croatia
- I have seen working practices in Hungary and Romania
- I learned more about working practices in other countries.

Which River Restoration networks or organisations delivering river restoration are you linked with?

- With National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management and National Administration "Apele Romane" (Romanian water authority)ANAR.
- FORECASTER, RESTORATION, ECRR, WWF
- NGO-s
- The general directorate of water management in Hungary.
- River Basin Directorates

From attending the workshop have you gained new river restoration contacts?
Y/N

If Yes, How many?

- Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Netherlands
- five: Romania, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, The Netherlands

How do you think you will find these contacts useful in the future?

- Positive, useful
- Depends on the problems I encounter in my work
- I hope to exchange opinions/ideas, to see the solutions, case studies.
- for exchanging information about issues related to river restoration.
- I hope we can help each other and discuss problems, results, solutions.
- Information of good practice.
- Sharing ideas, practices.

What new knowledge have you gained from attending the workshop?

- How to elaborate a strategy to promote River Restoration.
- I noticed that the problems are the same (obstacles, solutions).
- Different approaches about problems and policy in other countries as well as similar issues on this topic
- Exchanging experiences about river restoration.
- I noticed similar problems in Romania and Bulgaria.
- Legal regulation should be much better.
- I understand the organization of water management field in other countries- Romania, Croatia, Hungary.
- Experience gained in the RR field in Hungary and Croatia .

Are you willing to help disseminate information gained at the workshop Y/N

If so how would you do it and to what type of organisation?

- Write an article in Scientific Journal (ARA) - Romania.

-I will present the results of workshop to the colleagues from the River Basin Administrations, for help them in the next Master Plan.

-Within my company exchange emails and information on the River Restoration, centre and projects.

-Dissemination of information at the level of my organization or within other events, meetings which theme is river restoration

-Yes. To my own organization.

-Yes. By organizing seminars for directorates and regional offices of Institute of Environment.

-To experts in my job.

-To Basin Directorates, Ministry of Environment and water.

-Write an article .

What information would you look for on the river restoration website?

- Good practice
- Contacts
- Case studies ...

Please add further comments.

-Cost-benefits

-Technical solutions

-Also Basic Info on River Restoration

-How to present that River Restoration is cost effective on the long run.

-I consider that all mentioned aspects could provide information about river restoration – its importance, examples, etc.

-Failures- what not to do – learn from past lessons.

-Educational lectures.

Do you think that some of the outcomes from this event should be included in policy?
Y/N

If so which ones?

Yes. Good practice from The Netherlands and ECRR.

No

Yes, in Action plans/strategy

Are there any themes or topics you would like to see presented at future workshops?

- Study cases
- Field visit to River Restoration works.
- issues concerning land ownership
- Financial problems
- As previously more case studies and different experiences.
- More practical examples – case studies
- Technical solution for RR
- Examples that have proven to be executable, good legal regulations.
- Projects related with the hydro-morphological alterations.
- Guidances and practices.
- Implemented projects.

What do you see as the biggest obstacle to river restoration in your country?

- lack of financial sources
- owners mentality
- owners of land
- Defragmentation of land
- Not having enough knowledge on the RR Practices, related to motivation/reasons to do RR, and on the benefits of RR.
- The main problem is not solved, there shall be large wetland areas.
- Until this moment in Bulgaria, a river restoration plan has not been implemented and therefore there is a lack of capacity and experience in the fields of technical design, construction works and supervision. -The new conception for river restoration is still difficult to accept by the competent authorities in Bulgaria.
- Old understanding for flood protection (traditional engineering).

What do you see would result in the biggest win for river restoration in your country?

Floral protection,

More spaces for biodiversity life and nature

More species

Education

Ecosystem protection

Planned approach- one step at a time.

Space for biodiversity.

Better legal regulation;

More budget

Increased awareness through media ISP, TV and education.

National politics for RR and measures implementation on this politics.

Are you interested in being involved with future RESTORE activities/events? Y/N

Yes (13 answers)

Can we send you our news and event updates?

Y/N

Yes (13 answers)

Any further comments?

I appreciate much this event and professional level of experts from The Netherlands.

Regarding to the river restoration, the institutional framework encompasses four types of institutions state administration for water management (River basin Directorates and River Basin Councils, Governments authorities, etc), local authorities (Municipalities), public and non- governmental organisations and business organisations.