

ECRR Strategic Intent 2018-20

The ECRR Rationale & Need

European rivers are the most degraded type of water body in Europe and many of them are still under pressure. There are multiple impacts of these pressures on public health, flood risk, fisheries, recreation, urban environment and tourism and not least the ecological environment upon which so much depends. River restoration or ecological river restoration is a green infrastructure approach increasingly used in resolving river management challenges in many parts of Europe. It is a broad approach and often covers other evolving EU terms and strategies such as Natural Water Retention Measures (particularly fluvial flooding) and Nature-Based Solutions (working with nature in urban areas).

The ECRR defines **river restoration** as:

“Restoring towards the natural state and functioning of the river and the riverine environment. By assisting the recovery of river ecosystems that have been degraded, damaged or destroyed. River restoration promotes the sustainable multifunctional use of rivers providing multiple benefits to society”.

Planning and implementation of river restoration at the national strategic and local delivery scales is varied across Europe, in its robustness, use of evidence and availability of experienced practitioners. There is a pressing need to build capacity (nationally) and knowledge exchange (internationally) to meet the need of legislative requirements through accepted best practice.

The ECRR Association

The ECRR is an Association, with legal status under Dutch Law. The Association’s registered office is in the municipality of Wageningen, the Netherlands.

Purpose

The purpose of the Association is: to encourage and support ecological river restoration throughout greater Europe¹.

“The network for best practice river restoration in greater Europe.”

The Association shall endeavour to achieve this purpose by:

- Connecting people and organisations working on river restoration and management.
- Supporting the development of best practices of river restoration and management.
- Exchanging information about river restoration.

Reputation

The ECRR is considered internationally to be the key network to promote and build capacity for river restoration across Europe.

The ECRR is the authoritative voice on river restoration in Europe, and is respected by the EU, governments, and the wider river restoration community in greater Europe, backed by its formal national network of members.

¹ This European region comprises: the European Union, the Candidate countries to the European Union, Norway and Switzerland, the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia.

The ECRR maintains this position by making the most out of the active involvement of its partners, members and contacts.

The ECRR is an independent association, free to voice opinions, irrespective of the interests of partners and supporters.

The ECRR Audience

Some of our audience will share the same objectives as ECRR and to be equally committed to furthering river restoration across Europe. Many others will need convincing of its merits and application and require action from ECRR to change attitudes, ways of working and approaches to river and water management.

The ECRR and practitioners

The ECRR supports those who work on river restoration on the ground (including river basin managers, consultants, contractors, NGO's and local-scale volunteer organisations) by providing access to knowledge (good practice, experience, examples, support). We also support those who are involved in translating European and National policies to into national strategy, guidelines for implementation, local planning, and all stakeholders in the local delivery of such work.

This provides the ECRR with the legitimacy of representing the sector toward governments, the private sector, NGO and local volunteer groups and other ECRR partner organisations.

The ECRR and policy makers

The ECRR advises policy makers on national and European levels by: participating in consultative processes; communicating the needs of practitioners; and reviewing policy. We also support and develop national work on policy, strategy, planning and delivery by the inclusion of new countries as ECRR Members. Members receive the support of their international colleagues and can access a wide variety of advice and knowledge to feed back into their own country to address issues and problems.

This provides the ECRR with government support as the authoritative network on river restoration for Europe, and might bring with it possibilities for funding and other types of support.

The ECRR and research

The ECRR guides research institutions by identifying knowledge gaps among practitioners and policy makers, and by offering researchers opportunities for communicating their research findings. ECRR can also inform and mobilise others to strengthen research by providing access to case examples and understanding of how practice and policy, related to the science, strengthens these research projects.

This provides the ECRR with technical and thematic content for all its communications and activities, and access to new science and involvement in research projects.

The ECRR and the private sector

The ECRR collaborates with the private sector to encourage and support those demonstrating the best-practice of an ecosystem based approach and working with the environment. We also work with the private sector to influence attitudes and practice where it is detrimental to rivers and catchments. For example we work to influence land managers and the farming community, forestry, the hydropower energy sector, urban development.

We do this by promoting the multiple benefits of good ecology and the natural functioning river basins, as valuable ecosystem goods and services, and the concept of maintaining natural capital.

The ECRR ambitions

In order to give the network a more solid base, more involvement of members, partner organisations and the National Centres is needed. The ECRR defined its ambitions and actions to be taken for the coming years. These are:

- Strengthening and extending the network, and striving towards better collaboration (both within the network and to the outside world);
- Start up and grow initiatives (pilots, communities of practice, river works);
- Develop and initiate active relationships with governments;
- Strengthen / build up donors and sponsors;
- Taking an intermediate role between policy making and implementation by others, by producing guidelines , manuals, and policy reviews;
- Championing the need for cross Europe inventories of knowledge (the RiverWiki - online river restoration project database – RESTORE, and the REFORM wiki – online compendium of science and evidence on river restoration for basin management).

The ECRR Membership

The ECRR will grow its membership offering throughout Greater Europe to increase its reach and visibility and to secure a wide membership funding and operational task delivery base.

Members

ECRR Members will represent the ECRR, promote its values and purpose and actively work together to achieve the above stated ambitions. Members will disseminate their knowledge and understanding gained to all relevant stakeholders within the national context.

Via the Members most stakeholders and relevant players in the river restoration field will be easily reached in that country. Members will function as contact point to relevant knowledge and information, and will be the link with the international river restoration community.

Members will be organisations who are:

1. The sole national river restoration centre in their country, recognised by the responsible ministry (see ECRR Members – National Centre definition), or
2. An organisation working on integrated river (basin) management in Greater Europe with an emphasis on key aspects of river restoration, knowledge sharing and international cooperation (see ECRR Members – Topic Centre definition).

Members will be an integral part of the ECRR network, helping to shape and guide the river restoration community across Europe and bring the knowledge and experience of other countries to their own. Members will develop closer links with the wide range of expertise and support contained within the network to help overcome significant (often institutional) obstacles and barriers at home. Members become part of a bigger 'voice' within Europe and in the environmental debate.

Partners

The ECRR will seek to grow a range of partners who provide specific added value to the ECRR and its purpose. This added value may for instance include:

- knowledge & experience
- network (new audience)
- strategy (business planning & development, etc)
- joint 'partnership' projects or events

Partners will share the values and purpose of ECRR and actively work together with the Members to achieve the above stated ambitions.

Partners will become a part of the ECRR network, helping to shape and guide the river restoration community.

Donors and Sponsors

The ECRR will recruit a number of donors. Organisations who wish to contribute to the success of The ECRR and its purpose across Greater Europe.

The ECRR will seek sponsors to specific events and operations. Such organisations may contribute financially/in-kind to event costs and/or products and outputs of the ECRR.

Donors and Sponsors will gain a strategic link with the ECRR network and the river restoration community across Europe.

Communications

The ECRR will maintain and strengthen its respected role as the network for best practices of rivers restoration in Greater Europe, by disseminating knowledge, information and experience through a knowledge base and wide range of outputs and media (website, newsletter, seminars, training, conference, etc.).

This annual programme of work is detailed in the ECRR workplans for 2018 and 2019.

Finances

The ECRR will collect annual membership fees from all member organisations and donors to provide core funds to maintain and grow the central dissemination and network activities of the ECRR.

Funding will also be generated by marketing ECRR products and services (charging fees for events, offering place for advertisements in the newsletter and on the website, etc.), and by sponsor contributions.

The ECRR will seek greater involvement in large scale projects and funding bids to:

1. Secure greater funds to build capacity for the core activities of the ECRR (e.g. via a dedicated secretariat or a shared staff resource),
2. Secure funding for posts to generate outputs that reflect the purpose and objectives of the ECRR (e.g. guidance documents, training, evidence and demonstration projects).

Annex Listing

- 1. The ECRR Members; at the website.*
- 2. The ECRR Fees; at the website.*
- 3. The ECRR Donors, Partners and Sponsors; at the website.*

Approved:

ECRR General Members Meeting 2018