



Workshop on River Restoration and NWRM EUROPE-INBO 2014

Theme 1: How to integrate European directives and policies through river restoration measures and NWMRs

Reporting on the presentations and
working groups discussions

Roundtable Programme

- Panellists:
 - * Mr. Cristian TETELEA, WWF DCP, Romania, on “Restoration of Russenski Lom River near Ivanovo Rock Monasteries”
 - * Ms. Rosa HUERTAS, Conf. Hidrográfica del Duero, Spain, on the Case study of the Project Orbigo
- Presentations followed by discussions organised around 4 questions
- Animators:
 - * Mr. Edouard BOINET and Mr. Philippe SENNHAUSER, OIEau, France

Presentations

Main outcomes - First presentation: Restoration of Russenski Lom River

Mr. Cristian TETELEA

- * Presenting how to involve stakeholders in the wetland restoration project
- * Project philosophy: More space to the river -> more safety for the people.
- * Long decision making process to have all the parties to agree, but quick implementation once the decision has been made.
- * Possible through the change in environmental perceptions (ecological awareness and science), better understanding of natural river services for society (benefits, resources, ecological services)
- * Several positive impacts (reduce flood damages, increase of biodiversity)
- * “Is seeing believing” ?: importance of demonstrative examples to increase awareness and promote RR projects and NWRM

Main outcomes - Second presentation: River Órbigo Restoration Project

Ms. Rosa HUERTAS

- * Presenting an example of synergic implementation of different European Directives (WFD, FD, Habitats D)
- * Several positive impacts: Flood attenuation, groundwater recharge, better soil quality, higher biodiversity, improvement of the landscape and creation of a recreational area, comparatively low costs
- * Monitoring in order to have concrete data and clear identification of the benefits of the project to support communication and promote the project
- * The public participation (50 meetings in 3 years) was a key to success, as there was an opposition due to:
 - * Loss of land for human activities
 - * Perception that only hard works can prevent flooding
 - * Lack of basin scale approach philosophy

Main outcomes - Second presentation: River Órbigo Restoration Project

Ms. Rosa HUERTAS

- * In parallel, implementation of a volunteering and environmental education program
 - * To encourage active participation and raise awareness about river ecosystem
 - * Targeted everybody, especially those **not** taking part in the public participation process
- * Exemplary project, important for dissemination and training: strong demonstrative value to mobilize and convince. Key message: “this kind of solutions works and can be replicated in other rivers suffering the same problems”.
- * Video made to support dissemination: <http://www.chduero.es/VerVideo-previo-orb2.aspx>
- * Recommendation for Theme 1:

Showing with evidence the socio-economic and environmental benefits they involve for people

Split group discussions

Table 1

Main outcomes and recommendations

Cross-cutting and multiple benefits to promote NWRM and RR projects:

- Coordinating planning across sectors and at different levels is a key success factor for a large number of European, national, regional and local policies.
- River restoration and Natural Water Retention Measures are highly cross-cutting. This is true both in terms of policies and regulations (WFD, Habitat and Bird directives, flood directive, etc.) and in terms of institutions (administration in charge of water, urban development, rural development, agriculture, etc.).
- It does bring multi-benefits: flood prevention, soil fertilization, biodiversity, etc. But let's not forget that there are also negative aspects: for instance, ecological restoration may be done at the expense of agricultural area (see compensation issue detailed below).

Table 1

Main outcomes and recommendations

Facilitating exchanges/ Planning process

- High level political commitment is key to overcome issues of coordination between different administrations (e.g. Danube Strategy). But this is only good to trigger initiative. Ultimately, local implementation still depends on local authorities and local stakeholders/actors/affected people, often none specialists, hence the need to involve them with a common language.
- Need for “water committees” that ensure coordination between different sectors at different scales to deal with a complicated network of responsibility for instance for flood prevention.
- Need to provide a mapping of local interests to create ownership since the ultimate success of the project depends on local actors.

Table 1

Main outcomes and recommendations

Promotion of river restoration projects and NWRM.

- Developing integrated strategies covering each of the policies at play.
- Promoting dedicated “Water committees” for each project, as existing participatory institutions do not necessarily represent local stakeholders/actors/people affected by the project.
- Communication: promoting successful project in order to demonstrate concrete benefits (demonstrative value: “seeing is believing”) ; promotion of soft measures (e.g. buffer zones, wetland restoration) as opposed to hardworks (dikes, dams). Raising awareness through a wide range of media (movies, internet, etc.).
- Integrate compensation schemes, for example payment for ecosystem services (e.g. project of WWF and Coca Cola in the Danube). Common Agricultural Policy may provide some relevant funding opportunities for that. But since public funds are now a scarce resource, we should also foster research and experimentation on market based compensation.
- Promoting participatory approach and stakeholder analysis, on the basis of what is already done by the European Commission for instance.
- Articulating the different scales: national level for decision makers, local/regional for administration in charge of implementation, local level for local stakeholders. Keeping in mind: downstream/upstream solidarity.

Table 2

Participants to the Discussion group

- 9 participants in total:
 - Mr. Salah BELMATRIK
 - Ms. Lidia GABOR
 - Ms. Rosa HUERTAS (reporter)
 - Ms. Chahra KSIA
 - Mr. Ylber MIRTA
 - Ms. Tatiana ORTEGA
 - Ms. Iuliana Gabriela PIETRAREANU
 - Ms. Felicia POPOVICI
 - Mr. Philippe SENNHAUSER (Animator)

Table 2

Main outcomes and recommendations

Cross-cutting and multiple benefits to promote NWRM and RR projects:

- NWRM and RR Projects are highly cross-cutting. This is true both in terms of policies and regulations (WFD, Habitat and Bird directives, flood directive, etc.) and in terms of institutions (in charge of water management, urban and rural development, agriculture, etc.).
- It does bring multi-benefits at basin scale: flood prevention, ecological continuity and biodiversity, improvement of water quality, erosion prevention, etc. But also shall be taken into account the fact that this kind of projects sometimes requires land use change and can result in expropriations (with a resulting high public opposition).
- It often presents a high cost-recovery efficiency.
- There is still a need to develop the legislative and regulative framework to better promote and support NWRM and RR projects' implementation.

Table 2

Main outcomes and recommendations

Facilitating exchanges / Planning process

- Coordinating planning across sectors and at different hierarchical levels is a key success factor implementing NWRM and RR projects.
- Need for “committees”/”councils” with representatives from the different sectors and levels to ensure coordination, including transboundary committees when relevant (with political, technical and financial support).
- Need to involve the local actors/the public in the decision making process, for better acceptance of the project

Table 2

Main outcomes and recommendations

Promotion of river restoration projects and NWRM.

- Communication: strength of promoting successful project in order to demonstrate concrete benefits (demonstrative value: “seeing is believing”) ; promotion of soft measures (e.g. buffer zones, wetland restoration) as opposed to hard works (dikes, dams).
- Raise awareness through a wide range of media (movies, internet, etc.).
- Promote participatory approach and public awareness rising.
- Articulating the different scales: national level for decision makers, local/regional for administration in charge of implementation, local level for local stakeholders. Keeping in mind: downstream/upstream solidarity.