



Workshop on River Restoration and NWRM EUROPE-INBO 2014

Theme 2: Better engagement with local communities in ecosystem restoration projects

Reporting on the presentations and
working groups discussions

Roundtable Programme

- Panellists:
 - * Mr. Christophe BOUNI, AScA Consultant, France, on the Outcomes and main recommendations of CERCEAU study
 - * Mr. Dan BADARAU, Apele Romane, Romania, on the Ciobârciu Wetland Project
- Presentations followed by discussions organised around 4 questions
- Animators:
 - * Ms. Natacha JACQUIN and Mr. François TOUCHAIS, OIEau, France

Presentations

Main outcomes - First presentation: Outcomes and main recommendations of CERCEAU study

Mr. Christophe BOUNI

- * CERCEAU study: An overview of foreign examples of RR projects with a focus on communities involvement
- * Underlines the importance of: Leadership and initiative, Strategic dimension, Territorial relevance, Negotiation with the users, Animation for these strategic considerations.
- * For a better engagement with local communities:
 - * Need to convince elected people
 - * Need to communicate on what RR are and can achieve
 - * Need to work with local communities using different concertation and negotiation tools

Main outcomes - Second presentation: Ciobârciu Wetland Project

Mr. Dan BADARAU

- * Project on an area with 400 land owners
- * Different involvement of stakeholders: county and local authorities, other stakeholders (Environmental Agency, farmers, Universities, ...), and local population through posters, articles, mass-media and meetings.
- * Evaluation on how the project is perceived and on the consultation process after its implementation
- * Importance of co-operation and involvement with the responsible authorities and local people for the success of the project
- * Recommendations:
 - Make explicit room for participation
 - Make a clear participation plan from the beginning
 - Involve participation process experts (and not only technicians)
 - Communicate a lot and stress the importance of communication with the team and the stakeholders

Split group discussions

Table 1

Main outcomes and recommendations

- Building local community issues/requests into the restoration plan
- Use local knowledge to inform the planning,
- Local community ‘ambassadors’ from successful projects used to explain their initial concerns and the benefits they have seen.
 - Can be through:
 - Taking the representatives to on-site visits to other projects, or
 - inviting them as a speaker to address a skeptical local audience
 - E.g. local farmer changing management practices...
- Clear roles and responsibilities between implementers and the local community – A ‘river contract’ e.g. France [SAGE] (examples also Morocco, Italy)
- Use established and respected locally based NGO to manage project,
- Establishment of a local coordinating body (required by regulation),
- Local environmental fund (work with local businesses/industry to financially support local projects).
- Avoid too much technical language, delivered too quickly. Explain well and take
 - time for people to understand.
- Ensure a good gender balance across the project team – helps generate a wider audience

Table 2

Main outcomes and recommendations

- Real **adapted** participation of the local communities in order to reach acceptability. E.g : use multiple languages, use participation only if needed...
- Financing project is not the only goal. **Demonstrate** economical long term benefit (individual & collective). Explaining benefits takes time so you need to make planification.
- Stress on **affectivity** of the water body related to the project (historical heritage). Use cross-cultural supports, show biodiversity, school programs...