



**Proposal for Europe-INBO 2014 workshop on
“River restoration and Natural Water Retention Measures: how to help WFD implementation
with better integration of European directives and better integrated catchment approaches?”**

Concept note

June 2014

Context and Objectives

With regards to the WFD, the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water (2012) has shown that diffuse pollution and hydromorphology are significant pressures affecting rivers. Therefore, more efforts have to be implemented to address these pressures in order to reach ecological good status of water bodies as required by the WFD. One way forward is to improve the integration of European directives and policies such as Common Agriculture Policy, WFD, Flood directive, Habitat directive and renewable energy directive so that the proposed measures for reducing pollution and restoring rivers' hydromorphology can contribute to a wider range of directives' and policies' objectives.

Also, integrated catchment and river basin management are needed to deliver these measures and to address these multiple drivers. These measures include restoring and maintaining water related ecosystems by natural means.

There is also an increasing policy interest in the so-called Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) for improving water status on hydromorphology and diffuse pollution and for better flood management. To respond to this interest, DG ENV launched, end 2013, a dedicated project on Integration of Natural Water Retention Measures in River basin management. This NWRM initiative has dual aims: to develop a structured knowledge base on NWRM that can easily be accessed within the Water Information System for Europe (WISE); and to contribute to the development of an active European “community of NWRM practitioners”. This was achieved by the launching of different regional networks and the development of a practical manual for supporting NWRM design and implementation.

In this context, Europe-INBO’s conference presents a great opportunity to mobilise river basin authorities and managers on the issue of restoring and maintaining water related ecosystems by natural means, and its multiple benefits for water policies achievement and for a start on river restoration.

It is thus proposed to hold a workshop on “**River restoration and Natural Water retention Measures: how to help WFD implementation with better integration of European directives and better integrated catchment approaches?**” to take place on 13 November during 2014 Europe-INBO’s conference from 12 November until 15 November. This workshop would aim to increase awareness of these approaches, to highlight links with other directives and multiple benefits of such measures, and to work together on how to communicate on river restoration and NWRMs benefits and how to mobilise stakeholders who could be involved in project actual implementation.

This workshop aims to call inputs from Europe-INBO’s participants on some questions raised in particular by European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR) /Restore life + project and to share the views and experiences of Europe-INBO's participants regarding NWRMs and river restoration projects implementation, and related work with local communities and stakeholders' mobilisation. The workshop is proposed to identify some recommendations on how to communicate and organise stakeholders’ involvement by highlighting the multiple environmental, economic and social benefits of these measures in various sectors such as flood risk reduction, spatial planning, water resource, agriculture or biodiversity.

Contents

In a first approach, the main themes and questions that are proposed to be investigated during the workshop would be, from a RBD authorities and managers point of view, as presented below:

Theme 1: Better integration of European directives and policies through river restoration measures and NWRMs

Water bodies’ restoration can support the aims of several important European water related policies, and better integration of directives such as WFD, Flood Directive, Renewable Energy and Habitats directives is needed so that measures can be efficiently implemented together. NWRM can be one of them as it aims to integrate water resources management, reduction of flood risks and preservation and restoration of aquatic environment.

- 1. How can links and exchanges be created between sectors to better integrate the different policies?*
- 2. How to communicate to the river basin managers, policy makers, decision makers on various benefits of river restoration approaches and NWRMs?*
- 3. How to mobilise and convince partners of other sectors to take part in a restoration project and NWRMs?*
- 4. For better integration, at what scale is it needed to work and why?*

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

River restoration projects can bring changes to the local people, their environment and activities. Therefore the implementation of restoration project relies on good communication and local communities' involvement. It is needed to share ways to better work with local stakeholders, local decision makers, local authorities and general public, to raise awareness about ecosystem services brought by restoring and maintaining aquatic environment and to promote education programs.

1. *How to convince and mobilise elected people in favour of river restoration and NWRMs projects?*
2. *How to communicate on what river restoration and NWRMs are for and what they can achieve?*
3. *How to work with local communities?*
4. *How to mobilize financing for river restoration projects?*

Participants

The contents of the workshop will not be too scientific nor technically focused, and will be complementary to the ECRR conference as the INBO's audience is made of river basin policy makers and managers, and not river restoration practitioners.

Thus the suitable profiles for this workshop are those of "generalist field managers", belonging to WFD competent authorities or basin organisations and members of the Europe-INBO network, involved in water management planning or decision making process. No high level technical profile is required given that the exchanges are not sought to be at a too technical level. Participants of this workshop would be the usual participants of the Europe-INBO's conferences as this workshop would be fully part of the conference agenda.

For any further information or expression of interests, please send an email to: nwrrestorationworkshop2014@riob.org