



Summary Report on the Workshop 10th December 13.30 – 17.15, hosted by TNC

Restoring European Rivers: Can a Blended Finance Approach work?

The Biodiversity Strategy prepared by DG ENV sets an ambitious target: to restore 25.000 Km of rivers in the EU to their free-flowing status by 2030 to help to reverse the trend of habitat and biodiversity degradation and loss. This workshop hoped to kick-off discussions on how such a target can be financed.

(Link to presentations: <https://tnc.box.com/s/7vugsbvpicigxrt1qz09mfu4a7u72a1>)

The most important aspects of accelerating investment in river restoration in the EU were identified and broadly agreed to be:

- 1) Ambitious Restoration (& Protection) targets and accompanying obligations in EU, and with associated national, legislation/strategies;
- 2) Increased mainstreaming of biodiversity restoration spending in sectoral policies;
- 3) Capacity building and information sharing on public and private funding sources, and -
- 4) Building a stronger evidence base on return on investment from river restoration projects.

Beyond these four factors, the all-important ingredient for success and scaling-up river restoration and barrier removal initiatives are communication and buy-in at local level. Project communication, transparency and engagement with local and national stakeholders and/or decision makers requires an awareness-building process so that restoration efforts can resonate across the board and attract investment. Crowdfunding for small-scale projects has proven to help kickstart this process both locally and nationally and resulted in small dam removal projects. When combined with regulatory obligations of public sector entities, this can create true momentum and investment drive.

Costs of Barrier Removal and Restoration Activities

In the context of public funds, we will see a few dedicated windows for financing (river) restoration, with many solutions plausible for acquiring funding. The total funding need for the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy is estimated at **20 Billion EUR per annum (at minimum)**.

Overall, funding needs for river restoration work in Europe are rather significant and will continue to increase in the future as countries are embarking on activities to reach the 25k goal. As for participant experiences with costs for barrier removal projects, there was a fairly even distribution around project ranges from around 20,000 to above 1 million EUR. Barrier removal project **costs vary significantly**

depending on the size of the project, depending on structural, logistical and environmental factors - ranging from simple (20-100), Mid-range (100-500), and large projects (500<) EUR.

Funding Sources for Barrier Removal and River Restoration

The European Commission is contracting a study to identify the finance gap, and needs, to restore nature and biodiversity in the EU to achieve the restoration target of the Biodiversity Strategy– with EU and Member State level breakdowns. This should hopefully provide further evidence that funding needs can't be covered by EU instruments only, but resources need to be mobilised from all possible sources to drive the restoration agenda and achieve the target by 2030.

As for what sources of funding participants or partner organisations had experience with, it is clear that public funding was the most common source of finance for restoration projects, as a single source, for large scale projects. However, overall, there is truly a mix of experiences as to where and what type of funding has been utilized or accessed, with private investment from donors or philanthropic sources being common, however mainly for smaller scale activities. So far, blended finance doesn't seem to have been a common approach to date for projects.

The type of funding sources varies significantly depending on project size: many small projects are not capital intensive, and large projects (for example multiple barrier removals or restoration large stretches of floodplain) require a completely different level of, and more, investment.

So far, blended finance does not seem to have been a common approach to date for projects. However, blending of different sources of funding was seen as a great financial strategy going forward, especially for enabling the scaling up of barrier removal and river restoration work in the near future.

Possible Ways Forward

Based on what was discussed, it is critical to continue to make the case for restoration projects, in order to attract further private investment as well as bankable projects, by identifying the return on investment. Mainly, this can be done through credible business plans for these projects, with subsequent good examples to be used as a basis to communicate success and possibilities for financing and restoring river restoration initiatives successfully and generating returns.

As mentioned before, this ties into building a stronger evidence base with respect to the return on investment from river restoration projects. This would be a key action to scale up river restoration work in Europe, as actual benefits and costs need to be assessed in more detail. This is where innovative financing models should play an important role. On question would be if investors who may be able to tolerate a high level of risk on investments may play a part in increasing willingness of different sectors to invest in projects (by aiding in the creation of said evidence base and supporting innovative methods).

As much riverine infrastructure is public, and the amount of money in this sector is cumulatively often many folds greater than that in the conservation sectors alone, giving some thought as to how to bring these sectors together for co-financing of re-naturalisation projects, rather than focus on traditional environmental funds could be a possible way forward to help scale up restoration funding. The Swedish Hydropower Environmental Fund (financing either the re-permitting or removal of dams) is a great example of a cross-sectoral mitigation approach with funding support.

Approaching water-infrastructure owners or users to fund re-naturalisation or rehabilitation measures to counter negative impacts on river ecology and hydromorphology is worth exploring further, especially since we have seen some positive developments in this regard already.

There is great wealth of experience and innovative thinking around the topic of financing river restoration, with multiple possibilities for funding available – we merely need to see more of it, through the approaches, thinking, and analysis mentioned above, and drive innovation forward.

The organisers sincerely hope that the workshop was a good discussion starter, by bringing together a broad range of stakeholders from public and private sectors, NGOs, foundations and research institutions. There is still much to be done to be able to provide the solid financial bases and mechanisms for securing the needed sources for achieving the 25.000 Km river restoration target.

For further info please contact Henrik, Sophie, and Andras - at The Nature Conservancy Europe:

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Annex Attendee List (Registered for the Event)

First Name	Surname	Job Title	Company
Wojtek	Mroz	Project officer	Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network
Berit	Kohler	Researcher	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)
Marc	Ordeix	Coordinator of the CERM - UVic - UCC	University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia
Nicola	Mackley	Administrator	RRC
tara	sukic	Projectmanager	EuroNatur Foundation
Alexandra	Pappa	Project Manager	Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos
Alex	Bryden	Information Officer	River Restoration Centre
Giulia	Costa Domingo	Intern	IEEP
Kristin	Meyer	Project Officer	IUCN
Bart	Fokkens	Project coordinator	European Centre for River Restoration
Claire	Baffert	Senior Water Policy Officer	WWF EPO
Irma	Popovic Dujmovic	Program officer	WWF Adria
Leon	Kebe	Programme oficer	WWF Adria
Zoran	Mateljok	Freshwater Water Programme manager	WWF Adria
Danijel	Loncar	Freshwater Program Officer (communications)	WWF Adria
Sanja	Pokrajac	LER NbS Coordinator	WWF
Eva	Hernández	Living European Rivers Initiative Lead	WWF
Roxana	Schiopu	Regional Fundraising Coordinator	WWF-CEE
Jan	Kappel	Secretary General	European Anglers Alliance (EAA)
Beatriz	Merino	Director DFIs	TNC
Amelie	Huber	Project Manager	EuroNatur
Øyvind	Fjeldseth	Fish management advisor	The Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers
Laurice	Ereifej	Regional Freshwater Lead	WWF Central Eastern Europe
Camelia	Ionescu	manager	WWF
Emöke	Györfi	Freshwater Project officer	WWF Austria
Sofia	Perä	ecologist	Länsstyrelsen i Norrbotten
Lilian	Neuer	Research Associate Water Politics	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V.
Mark	Morris	Director	Samui France
Mathilde	Leymarie	biodiversity project manager	Bordeaux Métropole
Cécile	Bellot	Environment manager	France Hydro Electricité
Maylis	Desrousseaux	Associate professor	CNAM
Laura	Pedrejon	Principal Banker	EBRD
Stoyan	Mihov	Wildlife and Freshwater Chief expert	WWF Bulgaria
David	Hebart-Coleman	Programme Manager	Stockholm International Water Institute
Luis	Costa	Programme Manager	MAVA Foundation
James	Knightbridge	Senior Environmental Hydrologist	Mott MacDonald
Hakim	Hadjel	Regional Manager	WSSCC/UNOPS
Lidia	Nuño	phd candidate	Cranfield university
Teresa	Gil	Head Freshwater Programme	WWF-Spain
Jessica	ORBAN	Programme officer	Partenariat Français pour l'Eau
Siraj	Tahir	Lead Circular Water Economy	Arup
Amanda	Nyingwa	Technical advisor	GIZ Souyh Africa

Dirk	Sommer	SIO	IFC
Annette	Spangenberg	Head of Project Unit	EuroNatur
Antony	Currie	Editor	Reuters Breakingviews
Nick	Honeyball	Water resource and asset strategy	Affinity Water
Lydie	Menouer	Project development and sustainable finance	Maryll
Nelia	Ramos	Financial and Logistics Manager	GEOTA
Monica	Altamirano	Specialist Public-Private Partnerships	Deltares
ELENA	LOPEZ GUNN	Director	Icatalist
Jonathan	Low	Manager	Milin Kerhé LTD
Elodie	MARDINE	Chargée de mission Eau et Agroenvironnement	Syndicat mixte du Parc naturel régional des Volcans d'Auvergne
Georg	Johann	Leader Hydrology&Hydraulics	Emschergenossenschaft/Lippeverband
Jaime	Baptista	President	LIS-Water, Lisbon International Centre for Water
Johanna	Hägglund	Project Manager (River restoration)	County Administrative Board of Västerbotten
Helena	Newell	Enterprise Manager	Rewilding Europe
Mathilde	Rivallain	project manager	colas
Chantal	van Ham	EU Programme Manager Nature Based Solutions	IUCN European Regional Office
Vedran	Kordic	Project Officer	WWF Adria
Robert	Gould	Technical Director	RSK
Jack	Foxall	Environment programme consultant	Arcadia Fund
Ivan	Olsson	Project Manager	CAB Skåne
Fabien	Techene	Program officer	WWF Adria
Sebastian	Rock	PhD	Karlstad University
Karin	Olsson	Project coordinator LIFE CONNECTS	Länsstyrelsen Skåne
Lars	Thygesen	Nature and Environmental consultant	Danmarks Sportsfiskerforbund
Anna Grethe	Jensen	Journalist	Engkalven
Johan	Tielman	Environmental manager	Uniper
Martin	Redding	Obsolete Dam Removal Researcher - Europe	Rewilding Europe
Erik	Schenström	Specialist	Länsstyrelsen Skåne
Lidia	Arenillas	Jefe servicio estudios medioambientales	Confederación Hidrográfica del Tajo
Ana	Vicente Rangel	Comisaria adjunta	Confederación Hidrográfica del Tajo
Kim	Aarestrup	Professor	DTU
Anders	Persson	Technical Coordinator	Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg
Linda	Calamnius	Administrator	County Administrative Board of Gävleborg
Frida	Kaiskog	handläggare	länsstyrelsen Gävleborg
Borislava	Margaritova	expert Freshwater and Wildlife	WWF-Bulgaria
Finn	Jensen	Biologist	DTU
Kaare	Ebert	Biologist	Danmarks Sportsfiskerforbund
Manon	Pons	Engineer	EIFER
Sophie	Martin	Researcher in applied mathematics	Inrae
Nancy	Smith	Comms and Engagement	Water Resources East
GONZALO	MAGDALENO PAYÁN	Technician	Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge
phyllis	posy	President	PosyGlobal
Erika	Karlsson	Projektmedarbetare	Länsstyrelsen västerbotten

Annex cont. Final Agenda:

Time	Bloc	Topic/Format	Speakers/Participants
13.30 – 13.45	Welcome & Introduction	Welcome – Start of session & The importance of financing the restoration of our nature	TNC - Sophie Trémolet (Europe Freshwater Lead) TNC – Andras Krolopp (Senior Policy Adviser)
13.45 – 14.05	EU Green Deal - River Restoration Financing Opportunities	Financing the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy - EU MFF 2021-2027 and recovery fund	The European Commission (DG ENV) – Helene Perier (Biodiversity Policy Officer)
14.05– 14.30	The Costs of Restoration	What are the costs of river restoration?	TNC – Amy Singler (River Restoration Advisor) Spain (Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge) – Fernando Magdaleno (Assistant to the Deputy Director of Water Protection and Risks Management)
Break 10 mins			
14.40 – 16.15	How are we financing restoration & how do we scale it up?	EU LIFE & National Funds 14.40 – 14.55 Crowdfunding 14.55 – 15.10 Philanthropy & Foundations 15.10 – 15.25 Repayable Finance (Public & Private) 15.25 – 15.40 Finance models for scaling up dam removal in Europe: the need for blended finance 15.40 – 15.55	County Administrative Board of Skåne (Sweden) - Ivan Olsson (Senior Advisor and Project Manager) World Fish Migration Foundation – Karolina Gurjazakaite (Specialist) Mava Foundation – Luis Costa (Programme Manager, Mediterranean Basin) European Investment Bank – Stephen Hart (Loan Officer, Natural Capital Finance Facility) & Marco Beros (Lead Engineer) Rewilding Europe – Helena Newell (Enterprise Manager)

	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Key Questions – Moderated Discussion</i>	<i>Speakers & Participants</i>
<i>Break 10 mins</i>			
16.25 – 17.00	<i>What we can do in the Future: New Opportunities & Scaling up - continued</i>	<p><i>Discussion Points (& other points with relevance to previous discussion):</i></p> <p>1) Do we need more evidence and analysis (e.g. more CBA, more business cases) on the return of investment of restoration projects?</p> <p>2) Shall we seek to estimate funding needs for the overall restoration objective and/or at national level?</p> <p>3) What are potential financing vehicles (e.g. a Revolving Fund) for scaling up?</p> <p>4) How can we draw on multiple windows for public funding?</p> <p>5) Would best practice for funding different types of projects be useful in a form of guidance?</p> <p>6) Should river restoration be self-standing, or with which types of water-related investments would it need to be combined with in order to attract greater funding and deliver more sustainable results?</p>	<i>All Participants</i>
17.00- 17.15	<i>Conclusions & Wrap-up</i>	What have we learned and what do we need to know as a sector in order to be more effective at mobilising funding?	<i>TNC (Andras Krolopp & Sophie Trémolet)</i>