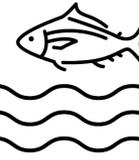




Next Steps in Danube restoration Macro- Regional Assessment

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Danube Lighthouse Targets:

Target 1: Restore at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers in Europe

Target 2: Restore certain coastal and freshwater ecosystems & habitats

Assessment of existing projects, identified gaps and recommendations

Source of presentation: Baseline study for the implementation of the Arctic/Atlantic, Danube and Mediterranean lighthouses of the Mission 'Restore our ocean and waters by 2030', commissioned by the European Commission, DG Research & Innovation (to be published soon)

Target 1: Restore at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers in Europe

Challenges

Potential Solutions

Lack of definition of *free flowing rivers*

Close gaps by increasing speed and scale of river restoration activities to a) restore ecosystems and b) enhance river water quality – many of the existing projects are overseen or advised by the ICPDR

Gaps in reaching targets of the biodiversity strategy 2030

Potentially harmonive monitoring techniques and parameters for hydromorphology

Different categories within river morphology, which makes it more difficult to compare across countries

Should include not only standards on morphology, but also on water flows, including the volume of abstractions, ecological flows and hydropeaking

Target 2: “Restore certain coastal and freshwater ecosystems and habitats”

Challenges

Lack of data on the state of biodiversity in freshwater, transitional water and coastal Natura 2000 sites

Lack of implementation of river restoration measures under the WFD requirements

Potential Solutions

Increase data collection specifically on biodiversity and habitat indicators

should include not only standards on morphology, but also on water flows, including the volume of abstractions, ecological flows and hydropeaking

Findings from interviews with project leads of currently running projects

- Some projects struggle with administrative obstacles and/or pressure to secure new funding in case the initial project needs more resources.
- For the Danube Delta, projects in Romania and Ukraine struggle with different incentives (related to Eu/non-EU country CAP subsidies).
- Project planners are interested to seize synergies, i.e. adaptation measures related to natural water retention measures for flooding and horizontal connectivity for river restoration.

Recommendations for supporting projects in a better way (1/2)

- build up on existing projects and continue work through the ICPDR to build work strongly.
- especially strengthen and enable restoration projects in the lower Danube.
- develop common definitions and protocols relevant for data related to the Mission targets.

Recommendations for supporting projects in a better way(2/2): Funding mechanisms to enable restoration projects

- Acknowledge external factors: inflations, administrative costs etc. can hinder the smooth project + internal factors, project-specific factors (e.g., an outdated inventory/baseline of the project area needs renewal to start the project).
- i.e. geomorphological data is outdated or not precise enough
- Offering support to EU member states and neighbouring countries in the funding, proposal and implementation phase of the restoration projects
- Bundling funding options and offering them through a one-stop-shop principle

Thank you

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