

WWF – NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

WWF Hungary (WWF Central and Eastern Europe)

WWF Hungary is a legal entity of WWF Central Eastern Europe and part of a wider FW community formulated by the European WWF offices (called Living European Rivers Initiative). WWF HU was the lead partner in the consortium of 8 countries.

Since its founding almost 30 years ago, WWF Hungary has been working on conserving our unique natural treasures.

The three main focuses of WWF Hungary's work are freshwater, forests and climate change. WWF has several years of experience in EU funded projects regarding conservation and restoration of habitats (grasslands, wetlands, forests), nature-based sustainable land management, protection of species, climate change adaptation and renewable energy strategies.

The goal of WWF HU's freshwater program is to stop degradation and to improve the diversity and quality of rivers, riparian habitats, marshes, side branches, oxbows and floodplain forests; especially along Hungary's priority rivers, Danube, Drava and Tisza.

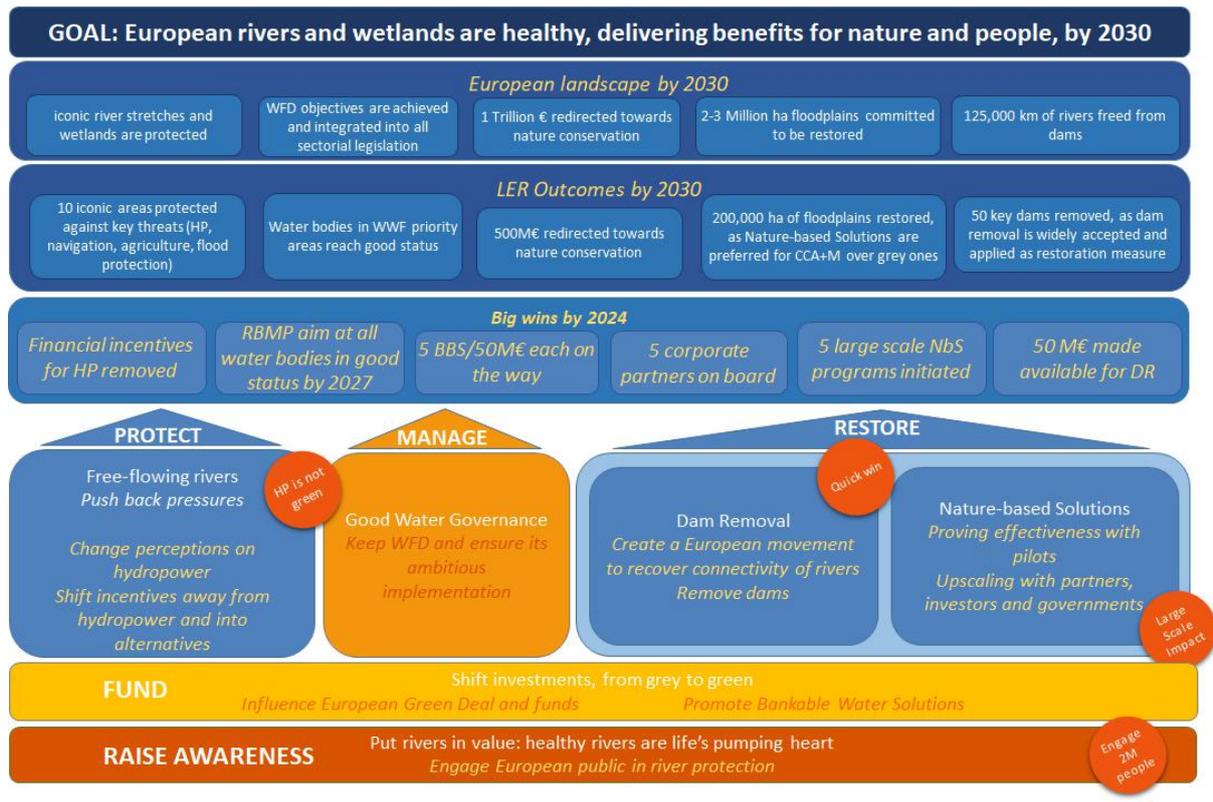
WWF HU has proven to be able to play relevant roles:

- Identify and understand incentives and difficulties and challenges of sectors that are influenced by the management of waters and wetlands, generate discussions and develop cooperation to find joint solutions;
- Analyse, plan and implement stakeholder involvement
- Connect science with policy; discovering upscaling mechanisms
- Translate overall strategic goals into practical approaches (From "know-how" to "Do-how");
- Has constructive co-operation with representatives of wide policy levels, thereby bringing together the relevant business and industry, policy representatives and authorities, financial institutions and donors as well as the general public.

WWF has a close connection with both local and EU level and can therefore act as initiator, motivator and replicator of best practice examples on the ground. - Through its wide experience with participative processes, WWF is focused on tackling the drivers and gamechangers in the different sectors, showing benefits of sustainable development.

Rationale behind project proposals and objectives of our work

The Living European Rivers Initiative of European WWF network main aim is demonstrated on this chart, this is also the wider context of our NBS related objectives:



1/ Nature-Based Solutions (Nbs) represent a valid and cost-efficient approach for improving rivers and waters' status and have the multibeneficial potential by using the synergies between the ecological improvement required by WFD and the socio-economic needs. The project proposals we developed are targeting restoration of rivers and floodplains with the following key aspects:

- satisfy the needs - like flood, drought mitigation, CCA - of affected sectors (agriculture, local governments, water mgmt), which are expected to contribute to the realisation of Nbs.
- demonstrates value of NBS as a multifunctional, integrated approach to support WFD/RBM implementation via using synergies between WFD requirements for ecological improvement and socio-economic needs (Flood Directive, Climate relevant strategies etc.)
- needs to motivate key stakeholder groups, practitioners and decision makers to accelerate restoration in the future.

2/ An overarching objective of any project proposals is to contribute to the EU wide acceptance, mainstreaming and implementation of nature-based solutions for the prevention and/or the management of floods and droughts, CCA.

3/ The specific objectives that need to be served by successful projects:

- Contributing to the increase of knowledge and practical insights with regards to NbS on local and regional level by transferring know-how in a concrete, applied way through a moderated "do-it-yourself" approach in pilot areas.

- Demonstrating evidence in terms of cost-beneficial character of NBS and the creation of economic cases that have better prospects to receive loans and grants than traditional grey infrastructure.
- Generating a new perspective towards a co-operative, cross-sectoral approach that unfolds the multiple-benefits of NBS by demonstrating benefits for every sector, especially agriculture, local governments/communities, water management and nature conservation. Furthermore, through this new approach, propelling of cross-sectoral, local change agents that tackle the challenge in a holistic way.
- Increased awareness and knowledge of stakeholder groups (agriculture/ rural development, water management, spatial planning) with regards to the benefits of NbS turns into active readiness for future participatory processes in integrated planning as part of WFD implementation, accelerated with wider use of river and floodplain restorations.
- Increased awareness and knowledge of targeted decision-makers turns into active readiness with regards to a change of behaviour necessary for improved implementation of WFD/RBMPs, Green Deal supported
- Exploring the synergetic interconnection between flood and drought management by demonstrating that proper prevention and mitigation approaches can be a solution for both. This would be based on the objective to increase the awareness that both water-related events represent two aspects of climate induced increase of extreme weather events. Furthermore, demonstrating mutual benefits of this integrated flood & drought approach through the potential to tackle seasonal floods and droughts in the same area with a unified, integrated approach.
- Initiating new working routines through breaking up traditional, sectoral working approaches that prevent the exploitation of multiple benefits for the respective sectors. Development of continuous joint learning approach by formation of new, co-operative, conflict-free working approaches. Furthermore, introducing successful maintenance mechanisms for keeping awareness, attitude and preparedness for implementation alive for a long-term run
- Improvement of outreach to the local population through knowledge-based media coverage.
- by improved, connected sectoral policies.

Contacts:

Laurice EREIFEJ
 Regional Freshwater Lead - WWF Central-Eastern European Programme
laurice.ereifej@wwf.hu
 Mobile: + 36 30 414 1982

Tamás Gruber
 freshwater programme manager
 WWF Hungary – WWF Central-Eastern European Programme
tamas.gruber@wwf.hu
 Mobile: +36 30 859-1531

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