



What European Union and other stakeholders can do in terms of ecosystem restoration?

Based on the study: Technical support in relation to the promotion of restoration in the context of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020



Monika Kotulak
Biodiversity and water policy officer

kotulak@ceeweb.org

CEEweb for Biodiversity



Baseline: the EU Biodiversity strategy 2020: **Maintain and restore ecosystems - Target 2:** By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure **and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems.**

Objective: In this study, we consider how the EU can upscale ecosystem restoration action with view of reaching the 15% target.

Actions: policy analysis, expert survey, stakeholder survey, policy recommendations.

EU POLICY	INCLUDING RESTORATION WITH DIRECT REFERENCE (YES / NO)	INCLUDING RESTORATION WITH IN-DIRECT REFERENCE
ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION POLICIES		
The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020	YES	
The Birds and Habitats Directives	YES	
Regulation on Invasive Alien Species	YES	
The 7th Environmental Action Programme	YES	
Sustainability and resource efficiency policies	NO	NO
SECTORAL POLICIES		
The Common Agricultural Policy and the Rural Development Programmes	YES	
Land use and climate policies	NO	NO
Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)	YES	
Climate strategies	YES	
Renewable energy Directive	NO	YES, restoring degraded agricultural land for cultivation
The Water Framework Directive (WFD)	YES	
Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM)	YES	
The Floods Directive	YES	
The Marine Strategy Framework Directive	YES	
The Common Fisheries Policy	YES	YES, restoring populations
EU Forestry Policies	YES	
Mining and extractive industry related policy	YES	
Cohesion policy	NO	NO
Sectoral policies with potential ecosystem restoration relevance	NO	NO
Environmental Impact Assessment	NO	NO
Strategic Environmental Assessment	NO	NO
Environmental Liability Directive	NO	NO
Regional development	YES	



THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS	Legal text directly refers to restoration	Legal text includes indirect reference	Restoration is included directly/indirectly in current calls of the financing period	Restoration projects have been financed in the previous period
The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) including Interreg	YES	YES, revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites	Directly	YES
The European Social Fund	NO	NO	NO	NO
CAP	YES (EAFRD)	YES	Directly	YES
European Marine and Fisheries Fund	YES	YES	Directly	YES (EMF)
Cohesion Fund	YES	YES	Directly	YES
LIFE Programme	YES	YES	Directly	YES
EU Research Funds	YES	YES	Directly	YES



Stakeholders survey: constraints for ecosystem restoration

technical and economic/ financial issues:

- (i) technical feasibility, costs and benefits evidence;
- (ii) market viability;
- (iii) financing.

information and management of restoration actions:

- (iv) awareness of restoration information;
- (v) governance and cultural barriers;
- (vi) language used across the restoration family.





RECOMMENDATIONS: How to overcome the constraints, mentioned by stakeholders

Frequency	Response
Most often	Knowledge/experience exchange, case studies
	Devoting more money/subsides
	Simplify the public acquisition process
	Awareness raising/training for stakeholders/engineers
	Legislative improvements
	More suitable planning
	Active stakeholder involvement
	Capacity building
	Develop a global, integrated approach (ecosystem approach)
Least often	Review or simplify the funding system
	Better communication
	Matching CAP or private sector money
	Improve Natura 2000 implementation
	Cooperation across sectors
	Risk management for unsuccessful restorations
	Learning from mistakes
Reducing bureaucracy	



POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- (i) policy clarity
- (ii) funding
- (iii) gathering and disseminating knowledge of restoration
- (iv) science and climate-change adaptation
- (v) language and communications.





i. Policy clarity

- Compelling action through existing EU policy e.g. Natura 2000, agriculture, forest, urban planning, the climate change mitigation strategy;
- Identify sites for big restoration projects;
- More ambitious policy goals need to be quantified and coordinated on all levels;
- Reduce bureaucracy.





ii. Financing

- LIFE projects devoting more funds to restoration;
- Reforming CAP payments;
- Initiating private financing – payments for ecosystem services, tax deduction, subsidies etc.
- Access to regional funding to support restoration;
- Better control over the use of EU funds (to avoid bad practice);
- Expanding markets for products associated with restoration;
- Supporting pilot or demonstration projects and increasing the capacity of governmental authorities, NGOs and foundations to broker and organise private investment.



iii. Gathering and sharing of knowledge

- Data and method sharing, publishing and improved monitoring, specifically for the restoration outcomes, the scientific evidence and tools for assessing habitats and ecosystem services;
- Encouraging good practice in measuring restoration project and programme impacts;
- Empowerment of local actors: moving away from purely top-down; approaches, more farmers and community involvement.





iv. Science and climate-change adaptation

- Coordination of research and best practice;
- Research and innovation addressing future challenges to which ecosystem restoration must adapt;
- ‘Adaptation-proofing’ EU funding – requiring it to make a net positive contribution to climate change adaptation (and possibly also mitigation).





v. Language and communications

- Better EU guidelines on management plans for specific types of restoration (e.g. for mining sites);
- Assessment tools/frameworks (e.g. ecosystem services).
- Structures for knowledge exchange, data sharing (e.g. databases);
- Developing links/ networks between scientists, NGOs and academics to promote more peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge through field visits, workshops and informal networks within a specific (language) region, communicating case studies to illustrate the benefits of restoration.



Main conclusions:

- Restoration should be strengthened within key environmental policies, sectorial and horizontal policies, SDGs and climate agenda,
- Member States should compile the Restoration Prioritization Framework,
- EU funding mechanisms, most notably LIFE, Natural Capital Finance Facility and regional development (e.g. Interreg projects) should be better used,
- Communicate best practices more efficiently.





Different actions will be feasible and effective over different timescales:

Short-term options include, among others:

- **Fostering the uptake of existing EU funds,**
- Establishing systems for knowledge gathering;
- Better use of existing knowledge (communication efforts, language change)
- Research into the socio-economic benefits of restoration
- **Informing policy and decision-makers of the socio-economic benefits**



Medium term options:

- Using evidence on the environment and socio-economic impacts of ecosystem restoration to link it more clearly to the overarching EU 2020 policy framework (growth and jobs agenda, EU 2020 targets), integration with the resource efficiency and circular economy agendas
- **Increase funding for restoration in the next EU Budget, (reform of the CAP, CFP, regional policy funding allocations, including specific recommendations for a potential TEN-G Fund);**
- Research into how to better integrate ecosystem restoration into the review of the Climate Adaptation Strategy,
- **Developing supporting policy targets to reflect the influence of diffuse pressures on ecosystem degradation and the contribution of their management to restoration,**
- How innovative funding mechanisms (e.g. the Natural Capital Financing Facility, Global Green Climate Fund) and business models (PES, ETS) can be used better to increase restoration financing.



Long term options:

- **Better integration of restoration towards the achievement of EU 2030/2050 policy targets and ambitions,**
- Climate adaptation, as part of the transition towards ‘a green, low-carbon economy/society in which key sectors are transformed, natural capital is protected and enhanced, and the health and well-being of citizens is safeguarded’.
- **7th Environmental Action Plan Vision,**
- **Water Blueprint,**
- **Biodiversity 2050 Vision,**
- **Climate targets.**



What ...

- National Governments,
- Local governments,
- NGOs
- Businesses

..... can do for ecosystem restoration?

What should be done more?
Who should do it?