Workshop on River Restoration and NWRM
EUROPE-INBO 2014

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

Reporting on the presentations and working groups discussions
Panellists:

* Mr. Christophe BOUNI, ASca Consultant, France, on the Outcomes and main recommendations of CERCEAU study
* Mr. Dan BADARAU, Apele Romane, Romania, on the Ciobârciu Wetland Project

Presentations followed by discussions organised around 4 questions

Animators:

* Ms. Natacha JACQUIN and Mr. François TOUCHAIS, OIEau, France
Presentations
Main outcomes - First presentation: Outcomes and main recommendations of CERCEAU study
Mr. Christophe BOUNI

* CERCEAU study: An overview of foreign examples of RR projects with a focus on communities involvement

* Underlines the importance of: Leadership and initiative, Strategic dimension, Territorial relevance, Negotiation with the users, Animation for these strategic considerations.

* For a better engagement with local communities:
  * Need to convince elected people
  * Need to communicate on what RR are and can achieve
  * Need to work with local communities using different concertation and negociation tools
Main outcomes - Second presentation: Ciobârciú Wetland Project

Mr. Dan BADARAU

* Project on an area with 400 land owners
* Different involvement of stakeholders: county and local authorities, other stakeholders (Environmental Agency, farmers, Universities, ...), and local population through posters, articles, mass-media and meetings.
* Evaluation on how the project is perceived and on the consultation process after its implementation
* Importance of co-operation and involvement with the responsible authorities and local people for the success of the project
* Recommendations:
  - Make explicit room for participation
  - Make a clear participation plan from the beginning
  - Involve participation process experts (and not only technicians)
  - Communicate a lot and stress the importance of communication with the team and the stakeholders
Split group discussions
Table 1
Main outcomes and recommendations

• Building local community issues/requests into the restoration plan
• Use local knowledge to inform the planning,
• Local community ‘ambassadors’ from successful projects used to explain their initial concerns and the benefits they have seen.
  • Can be through:
    • Taking the representatives to on-site visits to other projects, or
    • inviting then as a speaker to address a skeptical local audience
  • E.g. local farmer changing management practices...
• Clear roles and responsibilities between implementers and the local community – A ‘river contract’ e.g. France [SAGE] (examples also Morocco, Italy)
• Use established and respected locally based NGO to manage project,
• Establishment of a local coordinating body (required by regulation),
• Local environmental fund (work with local businesses/industry to financially support local projects).
• Avoid too much technical language, delivered too quickly. Explain well and take
  • time for people to understand.
• Ensure a good gender balance across the project team – helps generate a wider audience
Table 2
Main outcomes and recommendations

- Real **adapted** participation of the local communities in order to reach acceptability. E.g.: use multiple languages, use participation only if needed...

- Financing project is not the only goal. **Demonstrate** economical long term benefit (individual & collective). Explaining benefits takes time so you need to make planification.

- Stress on **affectivity** of the water body related to the project (historical heritage). Use cross-cultural supports, show biodiversity, school programs...