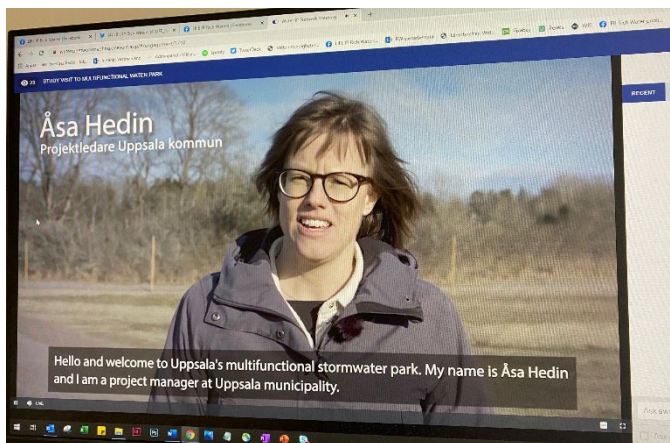
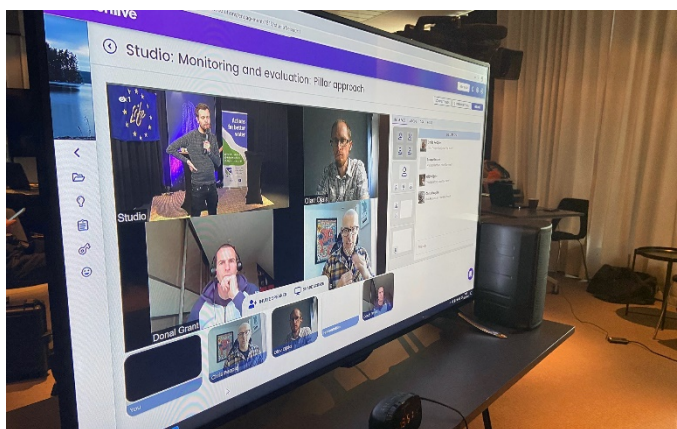




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Water IP Network Meeting 20-22 April 2021 – Summary report



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Introduction and acknowledgements

This document contains summaries of all sessions during the Water IP Network Meeting, organized by LIFE IP Rich Waters on 20-22 April 2021. No report could do justice to the many interesting presentations, lively discussions or important issues raised during these three days. This document focuses only on capturing the essence of the meeting, the main points raised and general questions. Full presentations from specific sessions are in some cases available. Please contact richwaters.vastmanland@lansstyrelsen.se

LIFE IP Rich Waters would like to thank CINEA as well as our monitors and the team at Neemo for support and advice throughout the planning of the conference. We are also grateful to all the participating projects for their valuable contributions to the programme and the discussions.

This report does not reflect the official views of the European Union.



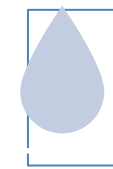
150 participants



15 countries



50 speakers



20 integrated projects

About the Water IP Network Meeting

Inspired by a platform event for water IPs, organized in April 2018 by LIFE IP Belini in Belgium, LIFE IP Rich Waters decided to host a similar meeting. Due to covid-19-restrictions, the Water IP Network Meeting was organized entirely online. This made a larger participation by projects and project partners possible. The meeting was designed to suit project management teams as well as associated beneficiaries implementing specific actions.

Many of the challenges to improve the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and other environmental policies are similar in all EU member states. The Water IP Network Meeting aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing between the integrated LIFE projects, to share lessons learned and results. The specific objectives of the Water IP Network Meeting were:

- To facilitate knowledge sharing of results and lessons learned between coordinating and associated beneficiaries in Water IPs

- To facilitate knowledge sharing of lessons learned between project management teams, addressing management issues
- To inspire and inform each other on the results of other IPs in Europe
- To facilitate for beneficiaries to find organizations in Europe to continue an exchange of knowledge

Next steps

"It was a very interesting, valuable event with a lot of knowledge, inspiration, ideas and also contacts!"

Participant feedback

In the closing session, Stewie Svenne from LIFE Belini shared their initiative with a Letter of Intent to ensure a continuation and possibly the organization of the next Water IP Network event. Daniel Gowar, LIFE IP Natural Course, proposed an informal platform to chat, network, discuss, share documents and keep discussing joint issues more freely. They have developed a Sharepoint site, with a linked chat forum for discussions and polls. The platform is intended for water focused IPs and would not in any way replace formal communication channels to CINEA or Neemo. Projects who are interested in joining this, please email Daniel.Gowar@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Participating projects

- LIFE IP Rich Waters, Sweden (host)
- Grip on LIFE, Sweden (co-host)
- LIFE IP Deltanatuur, Netherlands
- LIFE IP RBMP Duero, Spain
- LIFE Belini, Belgium
- Freshabit LIFE IP, Finland
- LIFE GoodWater IP, Latvia
- LIFE IP IRIS, Austria
- IP LIFE PL Pilica Basin CTRL, Poland
- LIFE-IP RIVERS'EAU, France
- LIFE IP CleanEST, Estonia
- LIFE IP RBMP MALTA, Malta
- LIFE IP LiLa- Living Lahn River, Germany
- LIFE-IP INTEMARES, Spain
- LIFE IP Coast to Coast Climate challenge, Denmark
- LIFE IP Natureman, Denmark
- LIFE IP Atlantic Region, Germany
- LIFE IP Waters of Life, Ireland
- LIFE IP Natural Course, UK
- LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature, Ireland

Outlook for the LIFE-programme and project presentations

Day 1 of the conference was dedicated to introducing the participating projects. As a special guest, Angelo Salsi, head of the LIFE Programme unit at CINEA, was invited to talk about Integrated projects and their contribution to EU policy.

Introductory presentation: Angelo Salsi, CINEA

Angelo Salsi, Head of Unit of the LIFE Programme, CINEA presented information on the current LIFE programme and upcoming changes:

- Integrated Projects (IPs) have proved to be very efficient. There are 59 IPs currently running and almost every EU country has at least one IP (12 IPs specifically focusing on water). The programme scope has expanded to not only include environment, but climate and energy as well. The programme has a growth of 60% of its budget, so that is a clear sign that IPs are working and are appreciated.
- IPs will transform into a slightly new format, Strategic Integrated Project (SNAPs and SIPs), but essence is the same as previous IP projects. SNAPs specifically focus on strategic plans addressing nature and biodiversity and SIPs are smaller projects targeting other strategic plans. New project formats will fit very well to upcoming strategic policy documents such as Biodiversity strategy or Green deal.
- Upcoming call for 2021 will be published in mid-June 2021, where there will be new application tools and forms that harmonize with other EU applications as well.

The presentation led to many questions regarding the new SNAP/SIP formats, but also about the impact of IPs so far on EU policy:

How many projects are in pipeline? For SIPs there will be a call every year. SNAPS will have a call in 2021, then 2022 and 2024. There are administrative reasons but also that we believe that the capacity to produce proposals are limited. We do not expect that every member State produce a proposal every year.

Is it limited to one SIP or SNAP per country? There are no limitations. This would not be suitable for federally structured countries like Germany. It will be possible to have regional SNAPs, and national SNAPs.

What do you think will be the biggest challenge for a SNAP? It could be more difficult to convince “at home”, especially for large countries. Smaller countries are easier with regional paths.

Will it be similar number of projects but larger? It's increased compared to previous IP editions. A small worry is that many members are already running Nature IPs and that there is a limit of admin capacity to engage in big projects. Probably we can use regional approach to fill in gaps.

What about projects finding synergies between different policy areas together with RMBP? It depends on the entity in charge, which focus. Can have an overlap and connection. We will continue to reward synergies in every project.

IPs' impact on policy level? Any examples of what IPs actually improve in national legislation? EU policy making-IP are starting to deliver in influencing how IPs are being seen in regional contexts. It takes some time, a full cycle, to show them that IP's are something that delivers. They are influencing local and regional legislation, but implementation is by far the most influencing. The most important are the people behind the IPs, that show to citizens that we are actually doing something.

About WFD implementation: Objectives should be achieved till 2027 at the latest. How will that affect future WFD applications?

WFD set the scene for having plans, we will probably not close all plans 2027 because everything is done. Every plan is moving target. Major targets will remain, there are many things left to do.

Presentations of the participating LIFE Integrated Projects

All 20 participating projects were given the opportunity to make brief presentations at the meeting. The objective was to give participants an overview of who's who and the main focus of each project. These projects presentations were followed by Q&A sessions. Questions were raised on both management issues and technical issues. This is a summary of general questions:

Number of beneficiaries: Several questions were raised about the number of beneficiaries. For example, LIFE IP Atlantic Nature has only two beneficiaries and was asked to share pros and cons: "We had a long discussion preparing the proposal, and we decided to keep it very small. The collaboration is really good with our partners and the implementation of concrete actions is very easy. We also have a lot of cooperation with other partners without them being part of the project and it works fine." Freshabit has 34 beneficiaries: "Having all these beneficiaries on board and coordinating them was our toughest challenge. But it is also a strength since they have good coverage in the country."

Building capacity: All projects deal with capacity building of some sorts. Projects were asked about the most important aspects of building capacity that leads to actual measures. LIFE IP Natural Course: "Understand strength and weaknesses and having representatives from each beneficiary to provide a voice into project design. Capacity building takes time – it is relationship management."

Results: Participants were curious to know if other projects had seen direct results in improved national legislation documents. LIFE IP Deltanatuur found in their first phase issues on a national level between two authorities regarding responsibilities. They then developed a natural programme where the responsibility becomes clear and all now know that it is a joint work. LIFE Belini has seen an increase in the local cooperation: “We talk to each other more know. We have an innovative pilot project where we did not think of policy at first. It is a humble approach to have a pilot that can grow.”

Lesson learned: LIFE Belini, as one of the most experienced projects, shared some important lessons learned: “The biggest challenge for us is the way you reach your objective. The good thing is that LIFE is very flexible, and that you can change the way you do the work along the way. When it comes to policies it’s always slow, but LIFE offers a good platform where you can cooperate with many different stakeholders with different knowledge. It does not always have to be so formal. Looking for synergies is also possible within your LIFE project.”

Working with agricultural sector: Several projects work directly with the agricultural sector and many questions focused on the challenges with this.

- IP LIFE PL Pilica Basin CTRL had a lot of meetings with agricultural centers, helping them to reach individual farmers with solutions.
- CleanEST had practical seminars with agricultural producers and involved agricultural experts, responsible for agriculture stakeholders: “Communication about pollution and agricultural producers is a bit sensitive, so you need a sensitive approach.”
- Atlantic Nature has an approach with specific farm advisors. This provides flexibility: what farmers need to do depends on the farmer, based on context.

A specific question to LIFE IP Duero focused on the need for better farm advice to ensure implementation of measures to meet the WFD objectives in the river basin. The project presented its holistic approach, considering all different needs of farmers: “It could also be issues not connected to water, like the access to internet. A better life quality of the farmers is our target. It is our obligation to work with the water directive, but we must do it together with the farmers and implement the water actions with the people. If there is an action that needs to be implemented by force, it is not going to be a success.”

Local stakeholders: How to get local stakeholders on board? This was another issue raised during the presentations. LIFE IP Duero shared their experience on working with local stakeholders living near the water: “They are very much aware of the problems. In all our discussions and talks we are trying to figure out what their concerns are. They do want to move on to a more economic model and our job is to help them to make this transition easy.”

Project management sessions

Monitoring and evaluation – pillar approach

Moderator	Lova Lind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Chris People, Neemo Olav Ojala, LIFE IP CleanEST Donal Grant, Waters of LIFE
Number of participants	35

Monitoring IPs: The pillar approach and the TMO's perspective

Chris People, Neemo

Integrated projects are designed to implement large scale strategies, and the previous monitoring method was carried over from traditional projects. This previous approach did not allow us to take into account the high-level perspective and did not focus sufficiently on results and impact. Neither did it sufficiently discuss the needs of the respective plans and strategies.

The pillar approach is a thematic approach to summarizing the aims and needs of the Plan: “pillars are the different aspects and measures of the Plan to which action is needed and applied, and which will be unique to each type of Plan and its geographical/legal context. These themes or pillars may also vary at different stages of the Plan's implementation and revision”

- Pillars could be technical, political, sectoral/modal, methodological or using other functional units
- Plan-specific (except Nature IPs)
- Separating the project into more manageable ‘chunks’

It should not be regarded as a new approach, it's a way to reorganize the way that the project is monitored. It may be necessary to reorganize the project, not redesign. Decision on the choice of pillars are based on several factors, for example:

- Practicality: What can actually be measured? Is the science developed and available?
- Priorities: What is most important? And for whom? Which stakeholders?
- Synergies: Are similar pillars used elsewhere in other plans, projects or initiatives? Is it useful to use the same?
- Gaps: Are some key issues excluded, ignored or de-emphasized in other Plans, or complementary/synergistic activities?

There may be projects that are not suitable for a pillar-based approach. But this will be agreed with your PA and TMO. We need to consider the wide scope and extent of our IPs. Prioritisation will be needed to focus on the most important aspects at that stage of the project development, key successes and problems and issues that need to be solved.

Interim/Final Report template has been updated to reflect the need to emphasise the Plan and provides the option for the Pillar approach. The overall intention is to move towards a focus on key impacts, results and (if encountered) barriers: environmental, socio-economic, policy, etc.

Link to the template: <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/life-reporting>

Implementation of thematic pillar approach - LIFE IP CleanEST

North East Estonia has a lot of challenges: Residual pollution from Soviet era, oil shale mining and industries, diffuse pollution and fragmented salmonic rivers. Focus on improving the status of the surface and groundwater bodies as well as capacity building. Main result from applying the Pillar approach:

- It was useful as an exercise: The pillar approach helps to find links between IP and target plan. Highlights gaps and overlaps.
- For reporting: The pillar approach as it is now is less useful as an reporting tool when there is too much crossover between actions to use it as a tool for monitoring.

The Pillar Approach to Waters of LIFE

The project is still in its initial phase and focuses on protecting on restoring high status waterbodies. It made sense to break down the project into manageable pieces with the pillar approach, particularly when the project is linked to a plan or a program that is going to have defined metrics measured anyway. Nationally agriculture is the number one pressure, followed by urban wastewater, physical alterations, and industry. For the high-status water bodies the pressure is predominantly forestry, physical alterations, and agriculture. But there is also a significant number of unknown pressures. The project has organized the Pillar approach after the different pressures in high-status waters. An alternative option is to organize the pillar based on an analysis of impacts of significant pressures on at risk waterbodies.

Questions and answers:

It seems that the pillar approach is a useful exercise for the IP-projects but may be less useful as a reporting tool. What is your reflection on this Chris?

It depends on the project. Some projects will fit easier into this approach than others. The approach is almost certainly easier to implement in the earlier stages of the project than later. Just keep in mind the purpose and the "spirit" of the idea which is to be able to report the progress you have made in implementing the plan. The project, CINEA and the monitor should agree on the best way for each project to approach this.

Do all project actions have to find their way into the pillar reporting? Some might not be suitable for that (e.g. project management actions). And some

actions might fit into more than one pillar. Is it possible to have them included in different pillars or can actions only be mentioned once?

This is probably one of the most common questions from a practical perspective, and a very important question. For cross cutting actions, it may not be optimal to use the pillar approach. If an action represents more than one thematic pillar it should not be reported more than once.

How to report on the progress of each action within each pillar? Should the results be aggregated, or can they be broken down action by action?

The aggregated result is probably more interesting for Neemo and CINEA, but this is not a set rule. The progress of each action will still need to be monitored.

What is the added value to the more traditional action per action reporting, for the project. Did it result in better cooperation, better outcomes, easier follow-up? and who did it, did you report in this approach from the start or do you have a comparison between both ways?

CleanEst: It gave a very clear overview to where there are overlaps between the project and the targeted plan, and where there is gaps that need to be managed. It was difficult to divide the project actions into pillars since the project was not constructed that way.

Monitoring and evaluation – capacity building and socio-economic impacts

Moderator	Lova Lind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Chris People, Neemo
Number of participants	20-35

LIFE IP Rich Waters introduced this workshop on evaluating capacity building and socio-economic impacts. The presentation gave examples on how socio-economic impact and capacity building is monitored in the project:

- A multifunctional waterpark in the city of Uppsala: Will facilitate greater accessibility for many different groups in the surrounding area. The plot was previously a just a field but will now be used for recreation and outdoor activities. The park is located between two residential areas, differentiated by socio-economic status. The material from building the park will be used to build a sledding slope between the two residential areas where the children can meet and play together. The park will also be used for study visits and to inform students on the environment, storm water treatment and different insects and plants.
- Sediment treatment in Lake Norrviken with an aluminum based flocculent to stop internal loading: A digital survey directed to the public through social media showed a greater knowledge among the public about eutrophication and water, as a result of the action and the communication

in media and social media. Many also expressed an interest to know more about the result from sampling and monitoring going forward.

Main points from group discussions

Group discussions to share restraints, lessons learned, good examples from monitoring socioeconomic results or capacity building.

- It can be difficult to set at baseline as well as to make sure that the project is the cause of the impact.
- Sometimes a measure is created in an empty space, where there before was nothing. In these cases, it is good to use more than one way of monitoring the impact, to triangulate.
- The guidelines for how to monitor socioeconomic impact is mainly developed for traditional projects, and not always easily applicable for IP-projects. Suggestion: to build a best practice database where IP-projects can exchange experiences and methods on how to evaluate socio-economic impact.
- It is important that the socio-economic impact assessment is performed by someone who knows the subject. Many projects will allocate funds to procure a consultant or scientist to perform the socio-economic impact assessment. Whether this should be done in the end of the project or earlier is up to each IP-project and their respective timeline.
- It would be useful with an EU-standard definition of capacity building that the projects can use.
- How do we best monitor the increased knowledge? In general, the projects often lead to an increased knowledge for the beneficiaries as well as other organisations. But it can be difficult to monitor if the knowledge is used in a later stage and how it is used.
- Difficult to monitor if the participant acquired knowledge from an activity.
- How do we best monitor a change in behavior?

Questions and answers - Chris People, Neemo

How important is it for an IP-project to be able to attribute impact to your project, and not due to outside circumstances? With projects at this scale it is a challenge to attribute effects to your projects, it is difficult to make sure that any change, physical or social, is due to project activities. The best we can probably do is suggest that we contributed to change. It is vital that we stop looking in these “siloes” definitions of socio-economic impact and capacity building, and instead focus on what are the changes we are trying to achieve.

Why isn't there an EU-standard definition of capacity building that we all could use? How are we looking to influence and move society forward and create change in behavior that result in change in society, rather than focusing on how many people attended our conferences. Capacity building can be many things: It is important to remember that capacity also is time. Capacity building can also be an organizational change to work in a more efficient way.

Do you have any recommendations of a project that has done the socioeconomic impact assessment well? Natural Cause IP will propose a forum for water projects in the last session on the last day of this conference. This would be a great opportunity to create a space to exchange experiences and best practice on monitoring.

Final comment: What is clear from today's discussion is that we probably need expert assistance to monitor both socio-economic impact and capacity building. IP-projects generally have substantial budgets and it would be a good idea to allocate a part of this towards procuring a consultant or hiring someone with the expert knowledge.

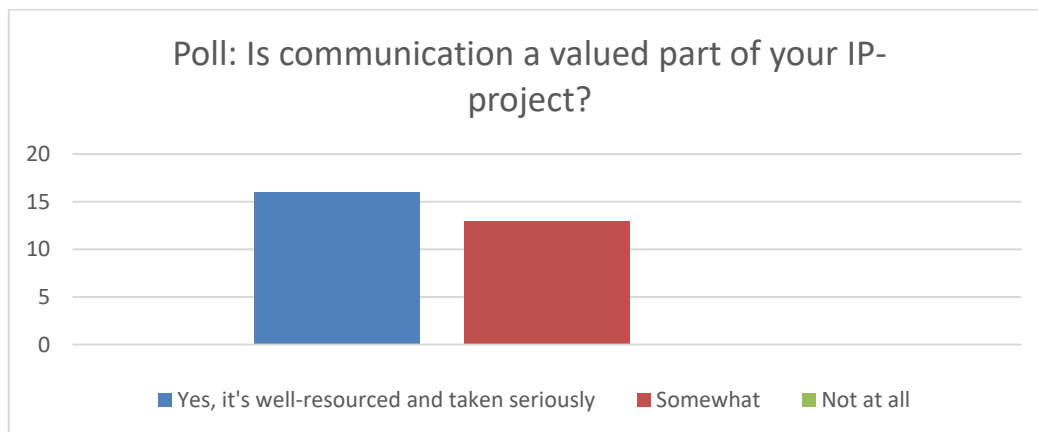
Communicating results for policy impacts

Moderator	Rosita Ericsson, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Clare Taylor, Neemo Stephan v. Keitz, Living River Lahn
Number of participants	

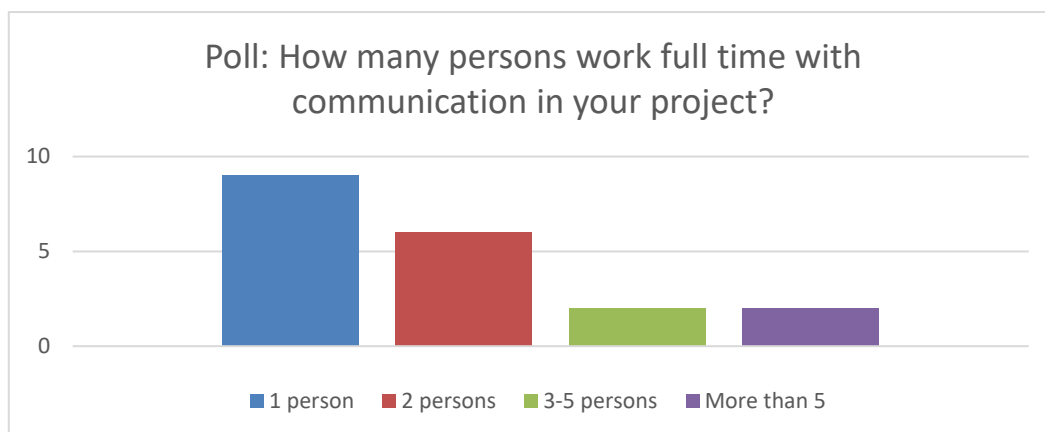
In this session, Clare Taylor from Neemo facilitated an interactive discussion on communication challenges and common issues among IPs. Issues where participants would like to continue an exchange of thoughts and experiences were identified, such as facilitating consensus building and measuring/describing/capturing impact of communication activities. LIFE IP Rich Waters will organize a new meeting to discuss possible ways for continued networking on communication issues. Those interested can contact Rosita.ericsson@lansstyrelsen.se

Main issues from the presentation and the discussions:

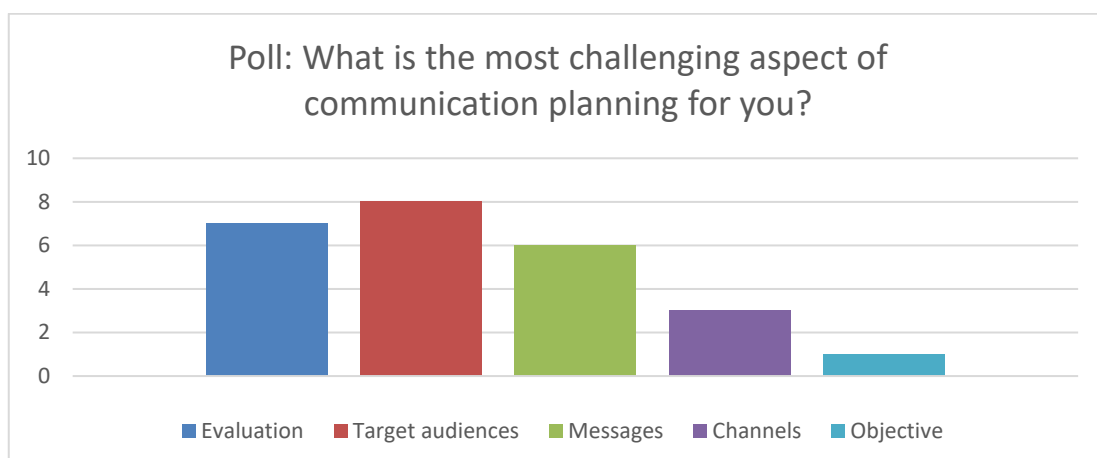
- Integrated projects are working on a much bigger scale than other LIFE projects. This can result in challenges to coordinate overall communication as well as meeting the different needs of the actions. It's a challenge to find a balance between helping beneficiaries with their communication and collecting results to communicate from the project as a whole.



- Different projects have different amounts of resources assigned towards communication. Available resources are a regulatory factor when it comes to communicating results.



- The current situation with digital interaction has been a challenge for many projects.



- Communication objectives: The more specific we can be in our objectives, and the more realistic, the more likely we are to be able to make it work. In the chat, participants shared their communication objectives:
 - Sharing the results of the project
 - Creating a community and a sense of belonging
 - Creating a change of behavior
 - Paving the way for future projects
 - Networking
 - Raising awareness
- Messages: When shown a few examples of successful messages, the group concluded that there are a few commonalities between them. Successful messages are short, connect to emotion, give people a sense of agency and control, are relatable and easy to remember.
- Evaluation: It was agreed that evaluation is a critical part of a successful communication strategy but also a difficult area. How do you measure change in behavior for example? Evaluation is however not always a priority due to shortage of time and resources. In the chat, participants discussed how they know if their communication strategy is working:
 - Direct feedback
 - Number of followers in social media
 - Website statistics
 - Noticeable change/effect on what you were communicating

Case study: *How the results from Living River Lahn feed into national policy, Stephan v. Keitz, Living River Lahn*

- Many people working with communicating results are civil servants, and in general not trained in communication. Our strategy has been trial and error: “We are prepared to deal with paragraphs, but not with stories”.
- The project experienced some problem with engaging all the partners in the beginning, bringing the actors at the regional level and the national level together.
- It is important to use data, the status of the waterbodies, as a base of the communication with the public. The public is very aware about the issue of straighten rivers in Germany, many are positive towards the measures and do not need convincing.
- Many activities are directed towards the public: an information center with games and a “Lahn window” to watch fish, the Lahn Concept direct dialogue, cooperation with universities and research institutes, RESI-river ecosystem index.
- The additional funds from the LIFE-program has made it possible to actively involve the public and work with different forms of communication.

Public Awareness raising

Moderator	Anna Andersson Ax, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Maureen Nuyts, LIFE Belini Vilina Evokari, Freshabit Rachelle Riolo, RBMP Malta Lena Allthin, GRIP on LIFE
No of participants	52

In this session four integrated projects shared examples of how they have been working with different activities to raise public awareness.

The fauna passage in Västerås – a living classroom in the middle of the city

LIFE IP Rich Waters started the session by presenting the fauna passage in Västerås as a good example of how the project have been working with transparency, availability and good media ambassadors to create public awareness among the citizens of Västerås.

Lessons learnt from public awareness activities

LIFE Belini planned a campaign to increase the engagement and the knowledge about water quality but also to improve the visibility of the local actions from the project. But a few days after the kickoff the Corona virus came and a lockdown followed. The Corona virus demanded the communication work to be flexible and adjustable and the project made the decision to do the campaign in a different manner with a new focus and messages.

Freshwater ambassador program for adults

In Finland there are 200.000 lakes and it is natural for Freshabit to see the local people as a valuable resource. They work with voluntary freshwater ambassadors of whom some of them are even fighting actively for their local waters. Freshabit has given the ambassadors guidance, information and knowledge about fresh water with the goal to start discussions about fresh waters and to get even more actions being made in the local waters. Freshabit are also producing different pedagogical materials for children and schools to raise awareness amongst the young people.

Public engagement activities

Malta is a small island with a very high population density and the access of water is low, even though the Maltese citizens use a relatively low amount of water compared with other EU countries. RBMP LIFE Malta has done a campaign filled with engagement activities to save water. The main target group is children, students and families with focus on educational activities.

The next generation

In an upcoming campaign Grip on LIFE wants to reach the next generation – children aged 6 to 16 – and inspire them to explore and learn about forests, water and nature. Grip wants to inspire teachers to move their education outside, to the

forest. Another target group is families with younger children. Grip works with emotional communication and the thought that “If you like something, you want to learn more about it and you will take good care of it – and that is what our water and forests need.”

Main issues from project presentations:

- The Corona virus affected all campaigns in different ways. This meant that the communication had to be adjusted as the work went along.
- Learning experiences and positive messages are more powerful than using messages that spread fear and are negative.
- To have young people as a prioritized target group is often valuable. The children and young people tell their parents about the need to save water or to protect our water systems in the forest and so. They can affect their families and teachers. If you reach out to people in a young age they can keep this learning process throughout the rest of their lives.
- It is important to have good ambassadors who want to work for better water in different ways. The ambassadors can be children and teachers, researchers at universities or retired men and women who have an interest in “their” water course. The main thing is that you find the right ambassador for your project or campaign.

Finding synergies

Moderator	Fredrik Norwall, Grip on LIFE
Speaker/s	Cesar Seoanez, CINEA Ann-Karin Thorén, LIFE IP Rich Waters, Grip on LIFE Helena Muehlman, LIFE IP Iris Jip van Peijpe and Roef Mulder, LIFE IP Deltanatuur
No of participants	30

The implementation of legislations and policies sometimes need to be followed by systematic collaboration processes and guidelines to adjust the implementation to be in line with several legislations, to find synergies and to avoid conflicts. LIFE IP Rich Waters, LIFE IP IRIS and LIFE IP Deltanatuur presented three different approaches through which different environmental policy areas have been handled. IP's are suitable for taking these kinds of holistic approaches to handle conflicts and gain synergies in the implementation of different legislations. The different approaches should be disseminated and spread, for example through the monitors to DG Env and CINEA.

Promoting Synergies at EC/DG ENV: EC considers synergies to have an increasing role and have made large progress due to this within strategic documents like the [EU Green deal](#), [H2020 and ESIF guidance](#) and [integration in Cohesion policy funds](#). Large progress have been made in the last decades concerning synergies. EC policy makers are working on it. But all levels are essential (national, regional and local).

Setting WFD objectives in areas designated for the protection of habitats and species according to the Habitat directive: As a cooperation between Grip on LIFE and LIFE IP Rich Waters, a guideline to set WFD objectives within Natura 2000 areas have been developed. The guideline is prepared for external consultation. As an example, ecological requirements for fresh water pearl mussel are suggested to be included in legally binding environmental quality standards within water bodies concerned.

Integrated River Solutions in Austria - Linking WFD and FD: Within LIFE IP Iris planning processes integrate the implementation of WFD, Floods directive, as well as Natura 200 and other plans where applicable. A guideline for the process is being developed. The planning process is tested and developed in 7 catchments in Austria. The approach is expected to integrate the planning instead of individual processes that leads to conflicting solutions. The process also includes a public consultation which is expected to lead to greater public and political acceptance.

Benefits for Nature Plan - Dutch large Water Areas: LIFE IP Deltanatuur works with Nature plans with the ambition to create resilient water systems where ecological values can be remained and improved despite climate change. Examples of positive lessons learned so far is that the focus have been on the joint ambition instead of separate responsibilities.

Complementary actions and project development

Moderator	Kristina Johansson, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Sarunas Zableckis, CINEA Jari Ilmonen, Freshabit David Liderfelt, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Number of participants	28

This session aimed at shedding light on complementary actions and their relevance for EU and policy making. Two integrated projects shared experiences and lessons learned on methods and tools for developing complimentary actions and new projects. There was an expressed wish to find a platform for continued networking and experience sharing.

Main issues from project presentations:

- There is not one recipe. Need to learn from others and adapt to your context.
- It is the simple things and relationships that are setting the stage for our work. Personal contacts are important!
- We really want to see our complementary projects improve the overall work and not only to be a number in the statistics. Working on

complementary actions should be used as an opportunity within the overall work.

- It was hard in the beginning to define what a complementary project is and how to report on it, but once we decided on a definition that works well for our project it has been much easier. Cooperation make a difference!
- It gets easier with time!
- Who will be in charge in these kind of questions after our LIFE-projects are finished (issue for further discussion)?

Main issues from CINEA's presentation:

Sarunas Zableckis from CINEA talked about how complementarity in integrated projects is used to accelerate implementation of strategic plans on country level. Some good examples were presented where small but very significant actions were taken, such as arranging meetings with people/organisations that are doing similar things but have not up to that point collaborated.

- Find synergies with other projects and stakeholders and meet to make sure you are cooperating and complementing each other's actions.
- We do work on big proposals and ideas, but it is the simple things and relationships that are setting the stage. Just the thing of getting everyone in one room is a basic thing that really matters.
- Use the flexibility of IPs to re-focus on strategic actions within your project along the way.
- Involve funding entities as partners and work with authorities.

Main issues from Freshabit's presentation: Jari Illmonen from Freshabit Finland described how they have been working with complementary projects and funding. Working with complementary actions were difficult in the beginning, especially to define what a complementary project is and how to report on it, but once they decided on a definition that works well for their project it has been much easier. Now they are coming to the end of the project and are in a phase to collect all data to conclude.

- Cooperation makes a difference.
- Use the beneficiaries in the project to develop complementary actions.
- Advice for newer projects: be creative but not too creative.

Main issues from LIFE IP Rich Water's presentation: David Liderfelt from LIFE IP Rich Waters in Sweden presented how they have designed the work on complementary actions as a subproject. The subproject entails for example project development courses as well as thematic coordination to identify possibilities to scale up or build on to already existing projects. A concrete example of a complementary project is an upscaling of a tool to identify lakes with internal loading of phosphorous which got national funding.

- Building relationships and knowledge takes time.
- Project development support functions (such as project development courses) can provide the extra support municipalities need to develop projects and apply for funding.
- Important to have enough staff time to develop complementary actions.

At the end of the session participants were invited to contribute with key words to describe lessons learned working with complementary actions and suggestions on how IPs can support each other:

1. What are your top 3 key words to illustrate lessons learned working with CA? 2. Suggestions for how IP projects can support each other



Thematic sessions

Free fish migration

Moderator	Jonas Berglind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Solon Mias, CINEA Tapio van Ooik, Freshabit LIFE IP Carlos Marcos Primo and Gustavo Gonzalez, LIFE IP-RBMP Duero Jonas Berglind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Number of participants	46

LIFE KPI data on barrier removal/fish passages: Solon Mias, CINEA gave a brief introduction to the background on KPI (Key Project Indicators) and presented some data on barrier removal and fish passages. In the end there was an analysis along with future steps for KPI. The data that the IP-projects inserts in the LIFE KPI webtool provides direct data on the number of bypasses built and the number of barriers removed or altered, as well as area or length of the waterbodies affected by the measures. Out of 22 LIFE projects working on the topic, IPs appear to have strong impact on barrier removal/fish passes creation (22% of projects). Traditional, focused Nature projects appear to have potentially the highest impact. Most actions are hydropower barriers, although a great number of projects cannot define their type of barrier (used Other as category). Perhaps this is a lesson for CINEA, is there a need to consider a change of indicators? Many of the newer projects are reporting data for the first time at the end of the year, and as a result more data will be available at the end of the year. LIFE KPIs in the LIFE KPI webtool are currently under review for the new MAWP. The JRC Guidance to MS on the subject is timely and alignment of LIFE KPIs would be of interest to ensure that LIFE projects are measuring something meaningful, easily verifiable, easy to aggregate and to communicate and that the data collected could find further use. If a member state is interested in the data from the KPIs, it is possible to get access to the data and disseminate it in any way.

The presentation led to many questions and comments from the participants:

You say that most actions are on hydropower barriers however, a great number of projects cannot define their type of barrier (they use the Other category). What changes are expected? Right now, we see that the most dams removed are connected to hydropower. Also flood protection are perceived as high impact. One reason can be that the barrier has more than one use, both hydropower and transportation for example, which is why the “other” category is used. When we have the data from all the project, we will have the complete picture and will know for sure. Then we can decide if there is any need for changes.

Currently there is a debate about increasing hydropower which is considered to be environmentally friendly, which is questionable. How can COM better promote free flowing rivers and protect the last once which have not been dammed up? This is a problem that many projects and IPs are facing. There are different stakeholders and different interest in the same river and waterbodies. It is important to have an integrated approach where you consider all interest. Therefore, IPs are so important, you can gather all interest and create compromises that are agreeable to everyone.

You said that LIFE KPIs in the LIFE KPI webtool are currently under review. What changes are expected and what is the timeframe? Any changes to the KPI will be available to the summer of 2022. This is primarily for the new IP-projects. No big changes are expected at this time, but we will wait and see.

Main issues from project presentations:

Fishways in Kiskonjoki: Freshabit LIFE IP has target areas in southwest Finland and are planning fishways in Kiskonjoki, while taking archeological findings, functionality, controllability, and cost into account. The project also took the interest of different local stakeholders and landowners into account.

- When planning and constructing of a fishway it is important to have everything in writing when making agreements with different stakeholders and landowners. This to ensure that all parties remember what has been agreed up on.
- In this specific case there hasn't been any conflicts or resistance from the local community. All stakeholder was eager to work together. This may be an effect of a long-standing relationship and dialog with the stakeholders in this area.

Recovering river connectivity – LIFE Duero: The project started after it was identified that river connectivity was the main reason that waterbodies did not reach good status. The presentation included three different cases and monitoring of the measures. It is now possible to follow how the trout and other species has changed how the fishes swim in the river, as well as their spawning areas. This is a result of the measures performed throughout the river.

- When there is a problem with alien species, these tend to be favored by the performed measures as well. In our work it is also necessary to control the alien/invasive species and favor the endanger species. It is necessary to involve all the governmental agencies that work with nature conservation and all the different stakeholder. In all Southern countries of Europe, invasive species are a huge problem in nature conservation. We need to find a solution for this, and we will do this in the coming years.

Connectivity in rivers – a strategic approach: In LIFE IP Rich Waters, there are three different actions focusing on creating free passages for fish. The project has taken measures to involve different stakeholders. Interviews with dam owners

and residents gave important insight on how to move forward with the measures and provided new dimensions. In addition to the measures, the project also creates places for visitors to enjoy the environment and the outdoors while at the same time creating the opportunity for learning about the measure.

Other points made:

- Long term monitoring is necessary to be able to see the impact from this kind of project. It is important to invest money in monitoring
- It is important to not only take ecological issues into account, but also involve all stakeholders and work together to find sustainable solutions.
- There was some resistance in the beginning. But the illustration showed the stakeholders it was clear that the solution would also be agreeable also to them and that we had respected their wishes. An illustration can be very usable in this kind of situation.

Biodiversity strategy – guidance on free-flowing rivers

Moderator	Jonas Berglind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Jeanne Boughaba, DG Environment water unit
Number of participants	20

Connected to the European Green deal, EU-commission is deciding on a Biodiversity strategy. It suggests the goal to protect 30 % of land and water and to restore at least 25 000 km free flowing rivers. The first draft is now developed by the Commission and be published by the end of 2021. Consultation with member states in May. Jeanne Boughaba, DG Environment, requested feedback on the strategy, and following issues were raised:

- The participants raised questions connected to definitions of the strategy as well as how different aspects are addressed or not addressed.
- The strategy proposes to address water bodies within WFD, which might exclude smaller stream that are often of ecological importance. The MS are however encouraged to include small streams.
- The strategy does not include new barriers. This will be addressed coming years, for example in the context of what is considered as green investments.
- Invasive species is so far not well addressed in the guidance or the WFD. This is something that needs to be considered. Some socio-economic aspects might also need to be further addressed.
- It's important with a holistic approach when planning for increased connectivity!

Eutrophication and agriculture

Moderator	David Liderfelt, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Leanne Roche, Directorate General Environment Ernst Witter, Rich Waters Josie Martin, Natural Course Jorgen Bidstrup, Natureman Arvo Iital, CleanEST
Number of participants	54

Agriculture and Water Policies in the EU: Leanne Roche, Directorate General Environment, presented the general policy framework.

- 60 % of water bodies are less the good statues, and nutrient losses are one main causes. Progress is slow but steady. Objectives are not reached due to slow implementation, insufficient funding and insufficient integration between environmental issues. Integration and consistency between the CAP and WFD are essential.
- The Farm to fork strategy, which is connected to the European Green Deal, sets reduction goals for nutrients. CAP and advisory services are important tools. Farmers need correct advice and it is important for the actions to be placed right.
- Now is the time for action when it comes to diffuse nutrient pollution from agriculture. The green deal is paving this work forward and the nutrient loss targets now must be addressed in the new CAP which is very positive.

Identifying measures for reduced eutrophication together with farmers –

LIFE IP Rich Waters: In Sweden there are mandatory measures, for example on storage capacity and spreading on manure, and voluntary measures within EAFRD and national funds like LOVA. The funds can finance cost efficient measures suggested in the RBMP's. In Sweden farmers can get free consultancy thru an initiative called "focus on nutrients". Sweden are also piloting catchment officers supporting implementation of measures. Farm-level water plans and catchment-level water plans are piloted in Rich Waters, as tools or working approaches to help farmers to identify the right measures in the right place. The method is to be evaluated. So far, farm level plans have been efficient to find localizations suitable for measures. In the catchment level water plans, hopefully, will make it possible also to identify to what extend measures are needed.

Farmscoper for phosphate measure planning – Natural Course: Valley brooks in England is affected by eutrophication. Modelling with SAGIS and Farmscoper have led to the conclusion that, with the current mechanisms, it will be impossible to reduce P to good status. SAGIS is a model used for identifying the pressures from different sources on both local scale and catchment scale. The pie-charts show that sewage and agriculture are the main sources of phosphorous.

FARMSCOPER is an excel-based decision support tool with a library of over 100 mitigation methods, parameterized in terms of cost, effect and constraints. The results of the modelling show that using all possible measures, the goal is far from reached, and the cost three times bigger the benefits. The conclusion is that payments schemes is required to reach the goals, which is also planned for as a future incentive.

The farmer as a manager of nature – Natureman: In LIFE IP Natureman bottom up processes are set up in 11 Natura 2000 sites to increase the biodiversity. The processes are mediated differently, for example by experts, educations, storytelling, workshops, field trips or interviews. In many cases by the stakeholders identifying hot spots out of the question “where is your secret place”. The process has turned out very well, and several concrete projects have been implemented. Though, it must be considered that it’s hard work to go through integrated processes with organizations only looking at their own interests. A change of mindset is needed, to be more focused on how an area can be developed into a better place to visit, live and work. The process will lead to a lot of project proposals, but it’s important to be realistic about the funding possibilities. It’s also important to have a project manager with the right engagement.

Involving agricultural producers in river basin management plan – CleanEST: In Estonia the agricultural use been intensified, and the competitiveness can be contractionary to environmental goals. Nitrogen concentrations are often exceeding EQS in many streams, while phosphorous concentrations more often are below the EQS. There are no general improvements seen, despite of the implemented measures. Risk of overfertilizing using manure, which is foreseen to affect the rivers in the future concerning phosphorus. The knowledge is not always good enough for the farmers to fully accept implementation of measures. Activities in the project includes gathering knowledge and data and use it for counselling and training for the farmers and advisors. One major lesson learned though is that these are big projects, involving many partners, which can make it challenging to cooperate.

Wrap up and comments:

- Farm advise should get more attention. We have a lot knowledge on measures. To get the information out it’s important to train farmers and farm advisors. The advisors need information at a regular basis. Behavioral change is slow, and farm advise could help to speed it up a little bit.
- Is tougher legislation needed? The first step would be to implement existing policies fully and to really use farm advise for the voluntary measures. And we do really need to keep on working together and get out of our silos and work together!

Urban water planning and climate adaptation

Moderator	Kristina Johansson, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Anja Wejs and Christian Dehlbæk, C2C Climate Challenge Manuel Sapiano, RMBP Malta Towe Holmborn, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Number of participants	32

The objective of the session was to share lessons learned about methods and tools to prioritize measures in urban water planning with links to climate adaptation. The aim was to exchange knowledge, facilitate new contacts and network among integrated projects.

Anja Wejs and Christian Dehlbæk, Coast to Coast Climate Challenge:

EU LIFE IP C2C CC is a consortium of 31 partners and even more stakeholders representing a quadruple helix set up. Based on defined parameters for network governance, the presentation introduced the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, the potential for improvements and the plans for continuing the partnership as a network in the After LIFE. Water does not know any frontiers and that is why the cooperation is so important. The C2C CC has been working a lot with strengthen relations between the different partners in the project through organizing trips and social events which have contributed to the creation of good relations. One challenge that still remains is to create a common identity in the project, which is hard due to the different opinions of the partners.

Manuel Sapiano, RBMB Malta: In a context such as Malta with dry conditions and water scarcity, already exiting methods and tools regarding urban water planning need to be adapted to the specific context. There is a need to work with a lot of different tools of green urban infrastructure to meet the challenges, challenges that will be further exacerbated by climate change. Manuel Sapiano presented different actions within their project, for example how they been testing and modelling different solutions based on tools such as GUIs and SUDS in a Maltese context. Both population and land are small, but Malta has the highest population density in Europe. This means a high demand of water but the amount available is not high. The natural resources on the island only give Malta half of what they need, even though they use resources efficiently. Therefore, the work of producing water and energy is crucial.

Towe Holmborn, LIFE IP Rich Waters: Towe Holmborn from Sollentuna municipality and LIFE IP Rich Waters project presented about their work with water planning. They initiated a work aiming at developing a criteria-based method to classify strengths and weaknesses in ecosystem services connected to water. The method was applied in the urban water planning process to identify need for improvement and protection which, in turn, was used to formulate necessary/desirable measures to be taken. Sollentuna municipality did not know of anyone who had done this before, it was a new approach and way to look at the

water plan. They have had a lot of cooperation with universities and researchers before, so it was a short step and came naturally to try it out. A question that came up during the presentation was regarding if it at this point is possible to point out examples of where the use of this method has changed or affected any planning processes or investments within the municipality. The water plan is still quite new, but they use the method daily in the detail planning processes. Many of the things that they found that are urgent ended up in the water plan as well.

Summary: The session included breakout sessions where the participants could discuss and exchange experiences related to the different presentations more in depth. Some key aspects that were mentioned in the discussions were about the importance to build networks and to create a common identity within the projects (especially when you have a project involving many organizations at different governance levels). This can be very challenging, but good and close relations between the different project partners is central to the success of projects. Other key aspects that were discussed included the challenges with lack of knowledge and consequently lack of acceptance of implementing ecosystem service analysis. However, the method is getting more recognized and slowly becoming a more common approach in planning processes on municipality level. The monetary aspect is currently not included in the analysis, so ideas and thoughts on how to implement monetary units into the method was discussed in the breakout session.

Mentimeter question: What is the first word that comes to your mind when thinking about urban water planning and climate adaptation?

At the beginning of the session:



At the end of the session



Bottom up approaches

Moderator	Ola Pettersson, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Victoria González, INTEMARES Žofia Filagová, LIFE Ostrovne luky Anneli Carlén, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Number of participants	

This session focused on methods and tools for bottom-up approaches and how to engage local level stakeholders. Three case studies illustrated best practice methods and challenges.

Main issues and lessons learned:

- A bottom up approach is about grass root movements – the force of people working together towards a common goal.
- Creating trust is key to success.
- Try to find measure that satisfy many different interest, win-win.
- Understand different roles and viewpoints.
- Involve locals early in the process.
- **Mistakes made:** Do not wait too long between contacts. People lose interests if they don't hear from us. Make sure that you do not move too fast forward. "You run and run and then you look around to find out that you are lonely".
- **Bridging the city-rural gap:** Coffee! It takes time and several visits. If you get a good connection with some locals, they will spread the word. Start in a small scale and be glad to make progress with that.
- **Making the first contact to make a good first impression:** Identify that local influencer and go thru her/him. Get to know who you should talk to. Go through the major of the municipality.

Engaging stakeholders for marine conservation - Intemares

- It is important to include as many different aspects and interests as possible. In the project there are participants from authorities, locals, fishery, NGO's, universities etc. Local knowledge and science need to work together, it's crucial for success. A common vision is important.
- A challenge is to consider all the policies, such as bird and habitat directives, water framework directive, EU common fishery policy, convention on biological diversity and more. And to get all interests together.
- It's also a big challenge to produce and implement a whole management plan for the marine area with so many participants.
- Always try to find values that are shared within the partnership. A mediation view. It's not about winning or losing.

Case study of LIFE Ostrovne luky

- Create engagement. It's important to reach out for the locals and get their trust and engagement and to find common issues such as water quality, hunting, fishery etc. Get to know your local stakeholders and the local influencers so that we can create win-win situations for the best to all stakeholders involved.

- It takes time to get to know your local stakeholders. Have that in mind when setting up projects.
- Once you get to know the locals and listened to them and understood their point of view it was easy to go further with measures.
- Arrange family activities so you also reach the next generation. For example, family tree plantation.
- Find common problems, common interests and common solutions.

Case study County of Södermanland – LIFE IP Rich Waters

- Try to get as many stakeholders involved as possible. In this project it is a mix of farmers, landowners, locals, NGO's, municipality and county.
- It takes time. Do not expect that you can reach out to all stakeholders in a short period of time. Be prepared to fight preconceptions because there are a lot of them out there. Listen and listen well!
- When you have reached all stakeholders and explained the purpose in the right way, then it's easy. But you have to do the work before it gets easy.
- Focus on building trust. Be patient. Clarify the stakeholders' role in the project. Form a sense of 'we'. Search for win-win-situations. That will inspire neighbors to also take action.

Study visits

Fauna passage in Västerås

Moderator	Jonas Berglind, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Johan Lind, Mälarenergi Susanna Hansen, Västerås municipality
Number of participants	21

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCt-HcWe1Rk>

What has been the reactions from different stakeholders and the citizens in specific? During the construction of the fauna passage there were a lot of discussions on the cost of the built. But now there is mostly positive response when we can see the effect on the fish. Be sure that the public can follow the result and be able to follow the fish when they use the passage. We have a fish camera that the public can follow live, and this is very appreciated.

What was the cost and how long did it take? Susanna: 2,4 million euros for the construction and on top of that cost for engineering and permits. 25 million Swedish Sek and it took approximately one year to construct.

Johan: I have built many passages in urban areas and my experience is that it will always be expensive. It is important focus on the result you want to achieve and the function.

What is the most important lesson that you can share regarding the process leading up to the passage being built? Johan: You should build something you believe in and not only try to adapt to different opinions.

Susanna: Make sure you have a lot of time, both planning and construction takes more time than you think.

Can you say something about the results so far in terms of effects on ecology and biology? Susanna: Great results so far. Both this year and last year it has been possible to observe the Asp and other fish spawning in the fauna passage. Fish also spawn in the passage, which is a result in itself and a credit to the design. Johan: The design of the passage shows that it works for different fish species, even species that swim in different ways. Even if it is not our objective that the fish should spawn only in the fish passage, this is a good result. When the number of fishes in the fish passage increase, they will move further up in the river.

Julmyra Horse Center

Moderator	David Liderfelt, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Carin Barrsäter, Julmyra Horse Center
Number of participants	21

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6ic7ero24c&t=5s>

Can you summarize the main positive effects, external to your own facility?

The facility serves as a good example of how to work with this and shows that it is not so hard. My colleague in the project was invited as an expert of eutrophication at horse farms by the government. We were involved in the investigation and made some distributions. This was the first time that the horse keeping overfertilization issue was mentioned in Sweden. It created a debate on social media and awakened questions on how horse owners should handle this.

How does the legislation differ from other agriculture and life stock keeping?

The legislation of horse keeping is not so strict about manure management or how large area you need for the horses. Horse keeping today is a hobby but also an industry and it is often located close to a town. If horse owners do not act now, I think we will have more strict legislation ahead. It is easier for a farmer to get financial support. The problem is that not every horse owner is not a farmer.

How will you monitor the effects? We measured before we did all the actions and now we are starting to measure again. It is not so easy to measure since the water in Julmyra is not only affected by our nutrition, but we will try to evaluate. We are going to take samples of the sedimentation ponds. We will use sensors and water samples.

Multifunctional water park

Moderator	David Liderfelt, LIFE IP Rich Waters
Speaker/s	Åsa Hedin, Uppsala municipality
Number of participants	25

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiAaJyxehN8>

What has happened since the film was made? We have started to build some boardwalks and jetties so that people can enjoy the area. Yesterday we started the planting of the authentic plants around and in the dams. It will still take one or two years before the plants are fully grown. The cleaning process will increase thanks to the plants.

Early in the project, you went to a study trip in Europe for inspiration. Do you remember what you took with you? I remember especially the recreational parts. In the Netherlands, the space for recreation is limited, so they we're very good at combining recreation with different wetlands and dams. We have tried to implement this in our project as well.

Have you done anything to assess the natural capital value of the wetland?

The wetland is in a natural reserve so it has been very strict in what plants to plan etc. We have been planting plants that look natural.

What kind of pollutants do you find in the sediments in the ponds - and what do you do with them? We do not know yet, but since its stormwater from nearby roads and parking areas we assume that we will have some oil and heavy metals in the water, and nutrients. Maybe even plastic material. There are some pre-sedimentations that we will dig out to be able to clean the pond.

How has local society accepted this project? Did you organize some public info events? We have been in contact with the nearby inhabitants. I visited some public meetings before the corona to inform them about the plans. They were all very positive.

Is there support for this kind of projects from the agricultural sector as well, as it does take up arable land? The water from the area enter into river Hågaån and we have started a water council with the landowners in that catchment area. Then the university SLU has contributed with some investigating in the area. Hopefully the water council will contribute to more actions in the area.

Are you able to put a monetary value on the benefits from the work - i.e costs averted by storage of stormwater, benefits to the health of local populations so averting pressure on health services? The water storage and the climate adaption aspects are a bit limited. If there's really heavy rain the dams will store some but not all of it. For socio-economic aspects we will monitor the number of visitors. We hope that this park will work as a place where people from different socio-economic groups can meet.

What is the plan for monitoring the water? We have had some monitoring in river Hågan which is the main recipient, and SLU has placed probes in Hågaån. They have also put in probes in the inlet and outlet in the dam to monitor the turbidity. We are going to do some sampling, check the biological diversity and investigate how the public experience this.

Evaluation and feedback

A survey was sent to all registered participants after the meeting to follow up on the objectives of the conference as a whole and the individual sessions. 26 persons responded to the questionnaire.

After participating in the Water IP Network Meeting, do you have a better overview of water-related IPs and how you can contact them?

93%	Yes
7%	I don't know

Did you identify persons during the Water IP Network Meeting that you are likely to contact in your work in the future?

78%	Yes
22 %	I don't know

Comments and feedback:

- The communication platform was very user friendly
- Thank you for the great conference. It was great to get an overview on all the European water IPs. I hope in the future a similar event can be held "live". Networking and exchange work so much better when you actually see people.
- Well arranged!
- I very much enjoyed participating in this online event. This was only possible because it was an online meeting - I would not have been allowed to join an actual conference in Sweden. Maybe it is possible to have smaller online meetings or workshops/ webinars on specific topics even beyond Corona times?
- Very nice technical platform and the approach of picking interesting sessions freely. Very well organised and hosted! Well done!
- A very well-organised and friendly online conference. Good participation. well done
- I would really like to point out and thank the whole team for an amazingly organised event. Interesting and educational topics, impressive technical support and beautifully prepared connecting program.
- Congratulations! It was a great pleasure to be a part of the Conference.
- Diffuse pollution from agriculture is the topic that unites all of the projects. More detailed meeting would be useful to share the methodological experience and the experience with stakeholder involvement. Sharing experience in ecosystem services could be a separate meeting also.

Was there a specific topic or session that you would have liked to see, that was not a part of the conference?

- Examples of implementation of water and nutrient retention measures, and research on efficiency of these measures.
- Project management experiences. How are the project organisations built up; how do the coordin. beneficiary directs partners towards deliverables; how does steering committees work etc. Target group project managers and deputies. The topic came out very shortly in a break out group within another topic. I would like to organise myself or attend (if someone else organises) to that kind of knowledge sharing meeting.

Participants were asked to rank how well the following statements matched with their experience (from 1-5, where 1=not at all and 5=very well)

Project management sessions

Session	Statement	Average rating
M&E: Pillar approach	I have gained increased knowledge about the pillar approach and how I can use it to present the results from our project	3,8
	Participating in the session has given me inspiration on how I can apply the pillar approach for our project	3,8
M&E: Capacity building and socio-economic impacts	Participating in the session has given me inspiration on possible ways to monitor socio-economic impact and capacity building	4,4
Finding synergies	I found the session relevant and/or inspiring	3,3
Communicating results for policy impacts	I have gained increased knowledge about communication strategies to make results relevant in policy and implementation	3,5
	Participating in the session has given me inspiration on how to create an interest in, and commitment to project results	3,5
Public awareness raising:	I have gained increased knowledge about different public awareness raising activities and strategies	3,8
	Participating in the session have given me inspiration	3,8
Complementary actions and project development	I have gained increased knowledge about methods and tools for developing complimentary actions	3,4
	I have gained increased knowledge about Complementary actions and their relevance for EU and policy making	3,5
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shred clear light over a field (synergies) that many MS and projects are struggling with. - I would like to see more such sessions in (online) conferences or specific workshops or webinars - This was excellent session, very useful for me. I learnt the strategical approach to the complimentary funding. 	

Thematic sessions

Session	Statement	Average rating
Eutrophication and agriculture	I have gained increased knowledge about incentives, strategies, and tools to prioritize and implement measures to reduce eutrophication from agriculture.	3,7

	Participating in the session have inspired me to perform similar measures or activities my own context	3,9
Free fish migration	I have gained increased knowledge about river restauration and connectivity	3,8
	Participating in the session have inspired me to perform similar measures or activities my own context	3,8
Biodiversity strategy – guidance on free-flowing rivers	I have gained increased knowledge about the EU Biodiversity strategy and Draft guidance on free-flowing rivers	4,4
Urban water planning and climate adaptation	I have gained increased knowledge about methods and tools to prioritize measures in urban water planning with links to climate adaptation	4,0
	I have gained increased knowledge about approaches on governance aspects in urban water planning	3,5
Bottom up approaches	I have gained increased knowledge about methods and tools for bottom-up approaches	3,9
	Participating in the session has given me inspiration on how to engage local level stakeholders	3,9
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-known experts gave the presentations, highly appreciated. - Nice overview across Europe. Valuable links to additional information - The presentations provided good insight in ongoing activities. - Many clarifications from EU-CINEA regarding the biodiversity strategy. - Nice examples of bottom-up approaches, very similar views across IP-projects. 	

Study visits

Study visit	Statement	Average rating
Julmyra Horse Center	I found the session relevant and inspiring	4,0
Fauna passage in Västerås	I found the session relevant and inspiring	4,2
Multifunctional water park	I found the session relevant and inspiring	5,0
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nice presentations of good examples. Looking forward to visiting the park in the real life (as far we have a budget for the experience exchange visits) 	



Havs
och Vatten
myndigheten