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Developing the practical guide on NWRM: a consultation note

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I. **Context**

The present consultation note has been prepared to steer discussions and feedbacks on the practical guide that will be developed under DG Environment service contract titled *Pilot project - Atmospheric Precipitation - Protection and efficient use of Fresh Water: Integration of Natural Water Retention Measures in river basin management.*

In coherence with the study's terms of reference and the on-going activities on Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) undertaken in the context of the European Union (EU) Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the Water Framework Directive (WFD):

- The target audience for this guide includes **staff from relevant authorities, experts and stakeholders directly involved in the planning and implementation of NWRM** in the context of the implementation of the WFD, the Floods Directive, and of strategies for climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture and forestry, or sustainable urban development; In addition, the practical guide might also help: interested parties developing project proposals for EU funding (e.g. demonstration projects for LIFE + funding); or funding agencies/bodies assessing the soundness of NWRM project proposals submitted for funding (be it at European, national or regional scales);

- The practical guide will **complement a more general policy document on issues and options for promoting NWRM in EU (water) policy**. This policy document will be developed in the context of the CIS (activity proposed under the Working Group Programme of Measures);

- The guide will also **facilitate the access to, and use of, the knowledge available in the NWRM database/collaborative knowledge system** – making explicit areas of the knowledge system that can be used for supporting the design and implementation of NWRM;

- The guide will be developed in English, and then **translated (main text) in all EU languages**. This will ensure that it can be an effective support to NWRM at the local level;

- The practical guide will be developed in **both paper and electronic formats**, the electronic version being fully integrated into the knowledge platform developed under the project.

The present note focuses on three key issues:

- The **process** that is proposed for developing the practical guide;

- The **structure** of the practical guide;

- The **type of information** that will be provided in the guide.

For each item, a **series of questions** is proposed for steering the debate among all interested partners, namely: the European C/DG ENV, participants in the four regional NWRM networks established under this study, experts and stakeholders visiting the study's web site (http://www.nwrm.eu/), partners of the project, etc. The answers collected will help refining the proposed approach and the structure of the practical guide so it better responds to the expectations and demands of its potential users.

I. Which process for developing the guide?

Co-building is the key principle guiding the process established for the development of the practical guide. The guide will be developed through an iterative process involving in particular:

- The members of the **CIS WG POM**;

- The **members of the four regional networks**, but also any experts or stakeholders visiting the NWRM web site and contributing to the discussion forum in LinkedIn Groups.

- A dedicated **group of practicioners** short-named as the Guide Support Group (GSG). It is proposed that around 10 "willing" practicioners (two from each regional network and two experts active in the field of NWRM at the EU scale) are closely associated to the guide development process. They will be asked to review initial versions of NWRM fact sheets, identify implementation issues that need to be addressed in the guide, help identifying the best examples that "make the case", etc. They will be involved via electronic communication and participation in a 1-2 day workshop where a draft version of the guide will be analysed and improvements proposed;

- **Other fora and events** as opportunities arise (e.g. meetings of the European Network of Basin Organisations, or research project meetings, etc.).
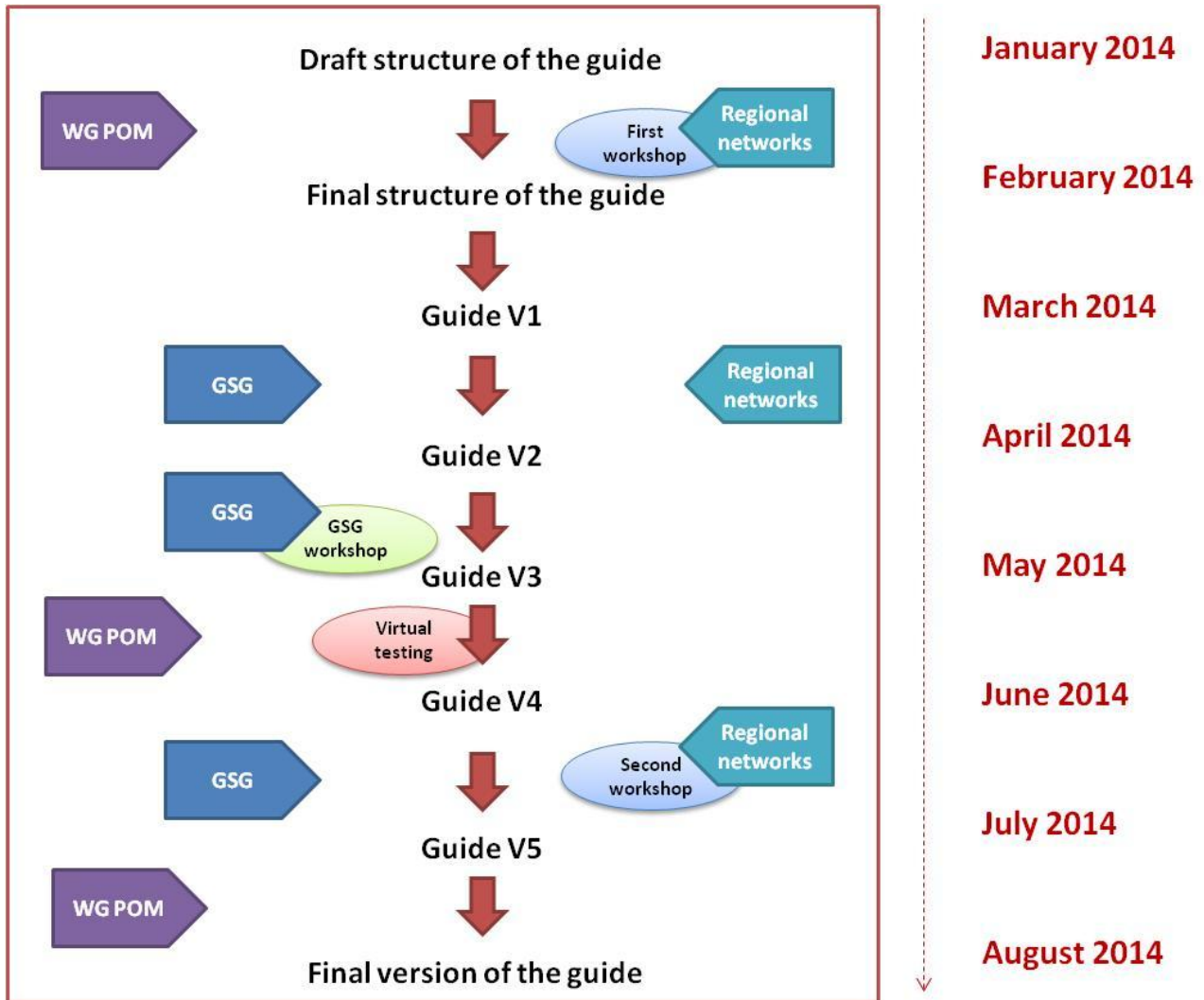
The experts and stakeholders involved in these different fora will be asked to review and comment at different stages of the guide development process (sending comments electronically or participating in presentations and working sessions during workshops and working meetings), in particular with regards to:

- The **target audience**, and its main needs;

- The **structure** of the guide;

- The proposed **content of the guide;** and,

- The **key messages** of the guide.

Within the consortium, different roles have also been allocated to different partners for the development of the practical guide:

- The different versions of the practical guide will be **developed by selected experts from the consortium specialised in thematic areas** (environmental effectiveness, socio-economics, governance and implementation) and **sector issues** (agriculture, forestry, urban development, natural systems);

- Once fully developed, the draft practical guide will be "**virtually tested**" by 4 partners who will not be involved in its development. By virtual testing, it is meant that one will follow the steps and logics of the guide to do "like if" a NWRM was to be designed and/or assessed, using the information available in the knowledge system. The results of the virtual testing will be shared and discussed during a web-conf dedicated to the guide.

The following schematic figure presents the main steps of the guide development process that is proposed by the consortium (note: English quality control and translation of the final guide are not added to this figure that focuses on the participatory component of the process).

Questions

Q1. Which additional "feedback-loops" or review steps should be included in this process – and with whom – keeping in mind the overall time-scale of the NWRM project?

Q2. Any candidate (with high level expertise in NWRM and their practical implementation) for being part of the Guide Support Group (GSG) and contributing more actively to this process?

II. <u>The proposed structure of the guide</u>

The following table presents a first detailed structure for the guide.

Part	Component/chapter	Sub-chapter	Content
Note to the reader			The context under which the guide has been developed (DG ENV study, participatory process, etc.) What is the main target audience? What you will find – and not find – in the guide?
Table of content			
Part I – The basics (what you need to know)			
	I. What are NWRM?		Definition, illustration of key types of NWRM
	II. Why to implement NWRM?		
	You will implement NWRM because...	II.1. It delivers multiple benefits	Description of benefits – with illustrations from different sites
		II.2. It can be the right option	Comparing NWRM versus other approaches – and stressing their advantage in terms of: cost-effectiveness, resilience...
		II.3. The policy context makes direct reference to (calls for) NWRM	Listing the different regulations, directives, strategies... that make reference to different types of NWRM => stressing that NWRM can deliver multiple policy objectives
		II.4. It is of specific relevance to the implementation of the WFD and FD	Role of NWRM for achieving the WFD and FD objectives simultaneously in a cost-effective manner – bringing additional benefits that might ensure effective achievement of objectives
	III. How to design and choose a NWRM?		
	You will need to...	III.1. Analyse the context to select the most appropriate NWRM	Present the different contextual information you need to consider for identifying the potential for NWRM and potential implementation challenges that might be met Screening among potential candidates – building on the pros- and cons- of potential candidate measures
		III.2. Design the NWRM	Design elements – specify for different types of measures
		III.3. Asses costs	Categories of costs to be accounted for and methods for assessing them (summary of the

Part	Component/chapter	Sub-chapter	Content
			methodological note on cost assessment – see below)
		III.4. Assess potential impacts	Assessment of the potential (negative/positive) social, economic and environmental impacts
		III.5. Assess benefits	Focus on benefits expected from the implementation of the NWRM and (additional) ecosystem services provided, combining qualitative, quantitative and (whenever possible) monetary estimates
		III.6. Screen possible measures for selecting the "most appropriate" one	Multicriteria analysis for comparing measures (NWRM and non-NWRM measures) – providing room for taking into account for multiple benefits, cost-effectiveness, etc.
		III.7. Develop pilot testing	If relevant: implement pilot applications for refining knowledge on the impacts and implementation of NWRM that can help refining plans for wider scale implementation
		III.8.Adapt the organisational set-up	
	IV. Which pre-conditions for ensuring effective NWRM?		
	Make sure that you...	IV.1. Build the right process	Who to get in and when Mechanisms established for mobilising relevant stakeholders Information and communication
		IV.2. Secure financing	Identify the different sources of financing that can be mobilised at different scales (table presenting the different financing instruments that can be mobilised for different types of measures – including EU-level financing) Present new financing instruments that can be (locally) put in place
		IV.3. Do not forget... monitoring & evaluation	Highlight the importance of M&E Present (for different types of measure) the type of indicators, and the information to be collected

Part II – The experiences: NWRM fact sheets

	The overall picture		Text and map presenting the experiences in Europe
	The experience(s)	One two page template for each NWRM fact sheet for key measures (8-10)	For each NWRM fact sheet; description of the measure, references to where the measure has been implemented (link to the knowledge base

Part	Component/chapter	Sub-chapter	Content
		covering a diversity of measure types and sectors (agriculture, urban, forestry, natural environments)	case studies), contexts under which the measure is relevant/not relevant, lessons from implementation and pre-conditions for "good" implementation how it has been implemented, social economic and environmental impacts, key sources of information
Part III – The tools			
	The glossary		Definition of key terms
	Widening the knowledge base		Sources of information: reports, internet sites, list of organisations
	Methodological notes	One note for each main "assessment aspect" Effectiveness/ environmental Impact Costs Benefits Implementation & governance	Tools that can be used (e.g. hydro-ecological modelling, valuation of benefits, etc.), information to be mobilised, indicators to be calculated, results expected....

Throughout the guide, efforts will be made to highlight the "proportionality principle", i.e. differences in the approach and level of details/effort you might have for different types of NWRM or contexts (e.g. not the same level of effort if we have a small NWRM or a NWRM that will lead to significant changes e.g. in terms of the total area affected).

Specific attention will be given to mechanisms (icons/diagrams, notes to stimulate the attention of the reader...) for facilitating the navigation through the paper format of the guide – an issue that can more easily be addressed (through hyperlinks and web-based navigation) in the electronic format of the guide that will be integrated into the overall knowledge base.

In addition, and as indicated above, the guide will provide direct links to the different components of the collective knowledge system (elements of the database, glossary, case studies, etc.). This will facilitate the access to the knowledge base for users of the guide.

Questions

Q1. Which **additional components** should be included in the guide?

Q2. In particular, the proposed structure focuses on design and planning – with **implementation being considered under pre-conditions only** (get the process right, secure financing, monitor and evaluate). Should a specific section be dedicated to "implementing right" (how to do the works properly – limit negative impacts in particular, which key problems faced when putting the measure in place, which solutions available that limit implementation difficulties, etc.)

Q3. Which **components** listed above should **not be included in the guide** – as these are: (1) considered as not relevant (of low priority) to the target audience, or (2) already available elsewhere (specify where)?

Q4. From your point of view, what are the **priority components (if any) of the guide** that will receive most attention from (future) readers?

Q5. Would you suggest **changes in the logical order** of the components of the guide? If yes, which ones? (what should come first, then second, etc.) ?

Q6. Any other comments on the structure – including on existing practical guide (linked to NWRM or related issues) that might serve as source of inspiration in terms of the format and structure?

III. The type of information included in the guide

The practical guide can include different types of information:

- **Text** developed on the basis of existing literature and reports;

- **Quiz** or multiple-choice questions helping to grasp the issues at stake (answers provided at the back or directly shown on screens when choice boxes ticked) and how the different elements available in the knowledge base can best be used for supporting the design and implementation;

- **Data and information from the different case studies** that are collated under the NWRM study;

- **Results from the comparative assessments** made between case studies (e.g. presenting tables with cost ranges for different types of measures);

- **Schematic diagrams** summarising a process, logical steps, issues to be considered, impacts, etc.

- Direct **feedbacks and "share of experience"** from practitioners and stakeholders who are/have been involved in the design and implementation of NWRM – this information being collected via (semi-structured) interviews performed for strengthening the knowledge base on NWRM;

- **Photos** that help understanding "NWRM in practice" (before and after intervention, works under way, monitoring equipment put in place, stakeholder/practitioner/group of stakeholders, communication material developed for raising awareness on NWRM in selected sites/countries, etc.)

- **Data sources, internet site addresses** and experts/practitioners/organisations contact details for readers that are interested "to go further".

Questions

Q1. Which **additional types of information** should be included in the guide?

Q2. From all the elements presented above, which one(s) would you be **looking for in priority** in the guide? Why?