

Embedding large scale freshwater Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into economic sectors

LER meeting; NbS session

Weds 26th April 2023

10:00 – 13:30 CET -

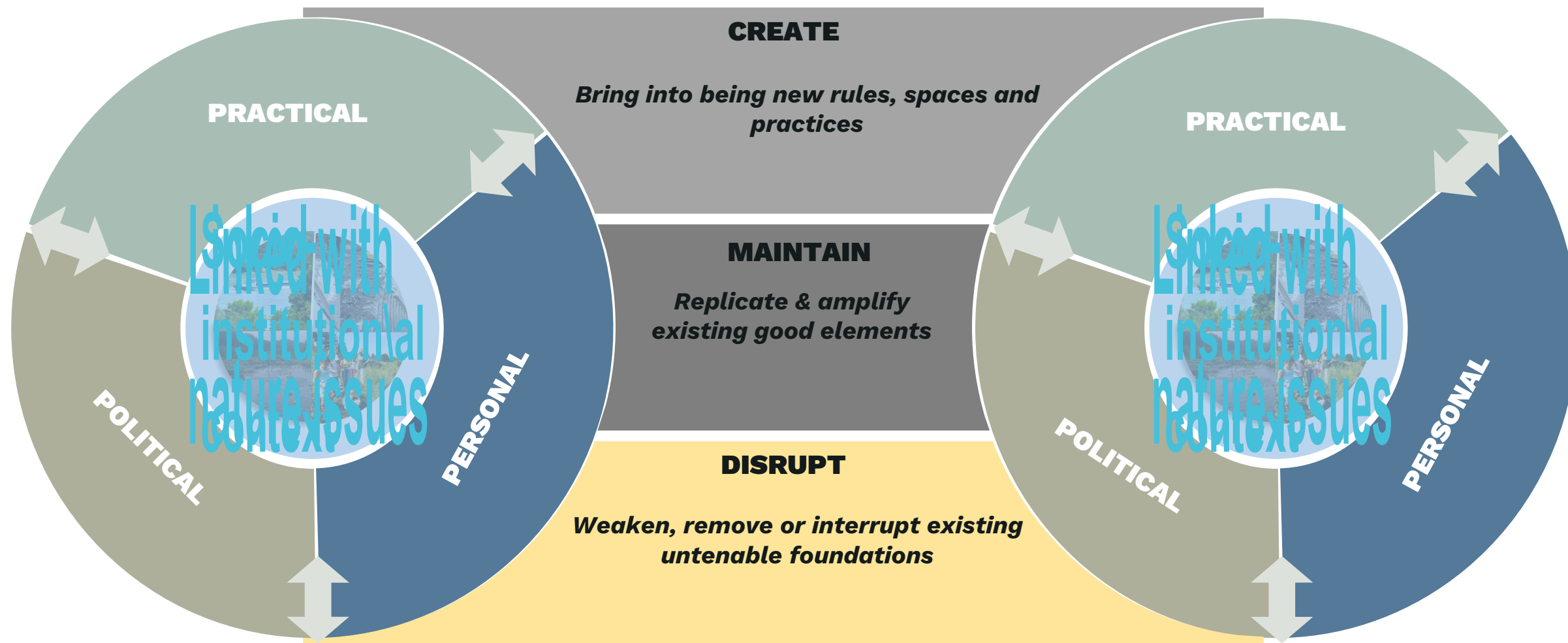
Anna Bérczi-Siket

MERLIN

Mainstreaming Ecological Restoration
of freshwater-related ecosystems
in a Landscape context:
INnovation, upscaling and transformation



How can we support transformation?



The MERLIN project

- Need to protect & restore in more places
- Solutions that last beyond traditional restoration to NbS



- **H2020 “Green Deal” call**
- **47 partners** from academia, NGOs, water agencies, municipalities and practitioners
- €21M (**50% into restoration** projects)
- Duration: 2021-2025
- *Ambition:* Contributing to **societal transformation using nature-based solutions**

Sharing & shaping
good-practice in
business

Sharing & shaping
good practice in
places

18 restoration
case-studies

**PEATLANDS
AND WETLANDS**



**SMALL STREAMS
AND BASINS**

LARGE RIVERS



Agriculture



Insurance



Peat
Extraction



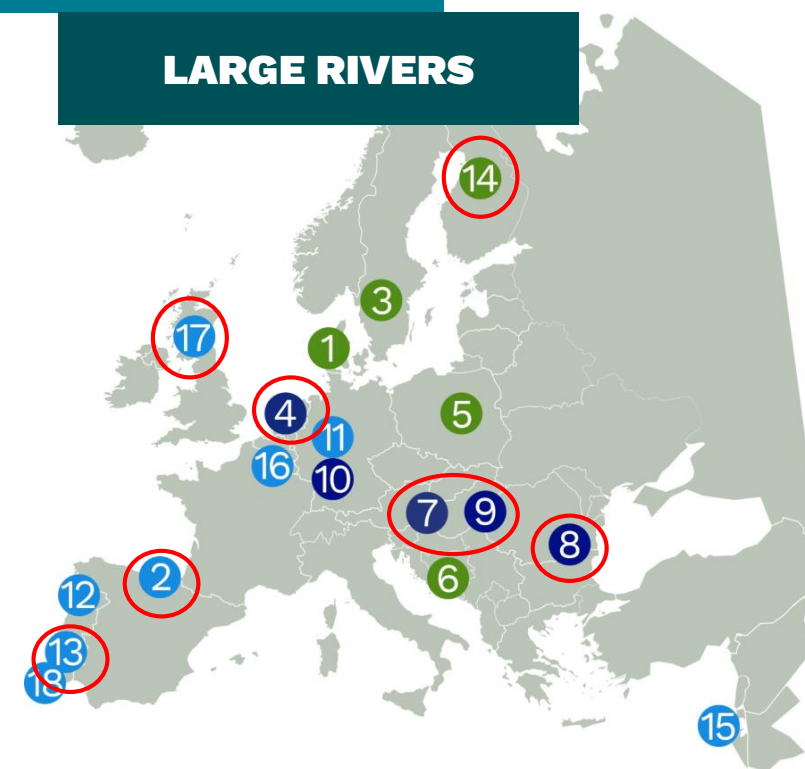
Water Supply
& Sanitation



Navigation

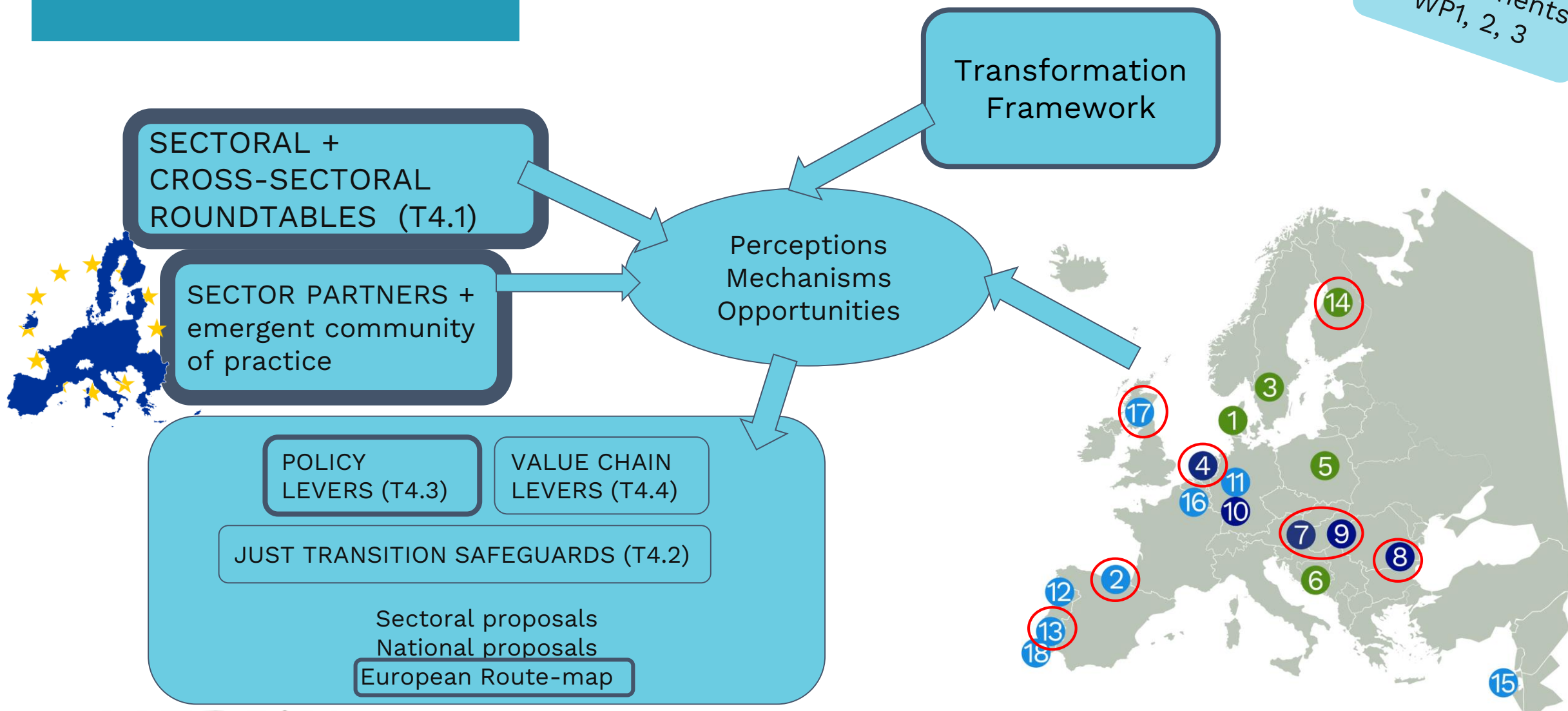


Hydropower



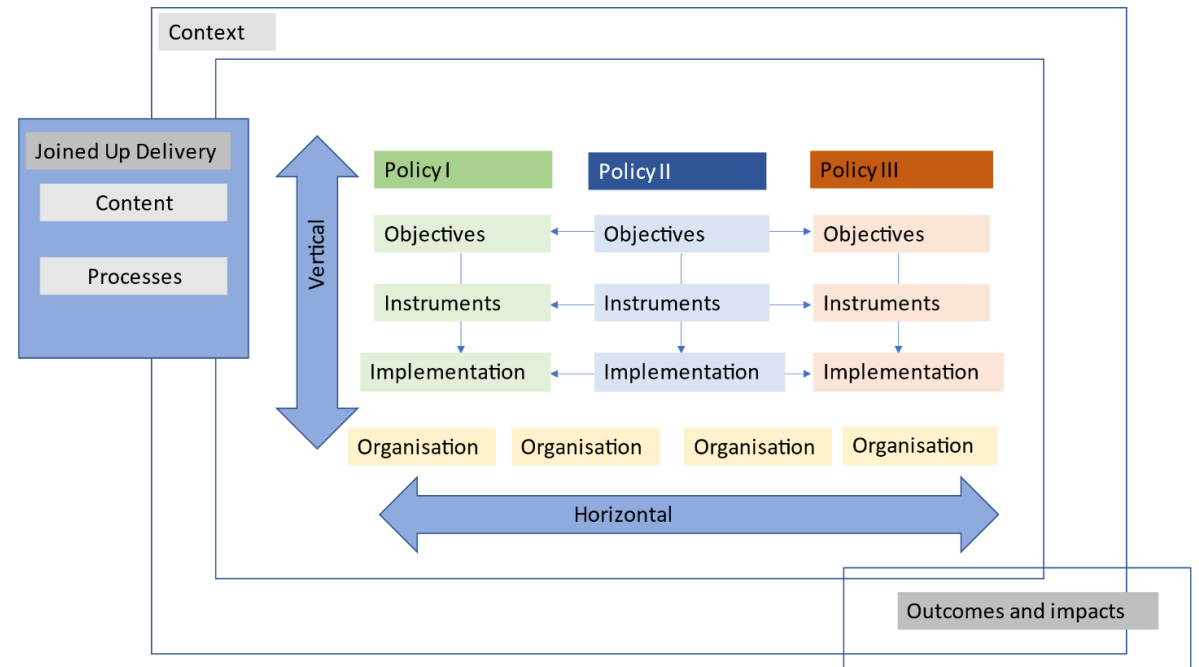
MERLIN's WP4

Complements
WP1, 2, 3



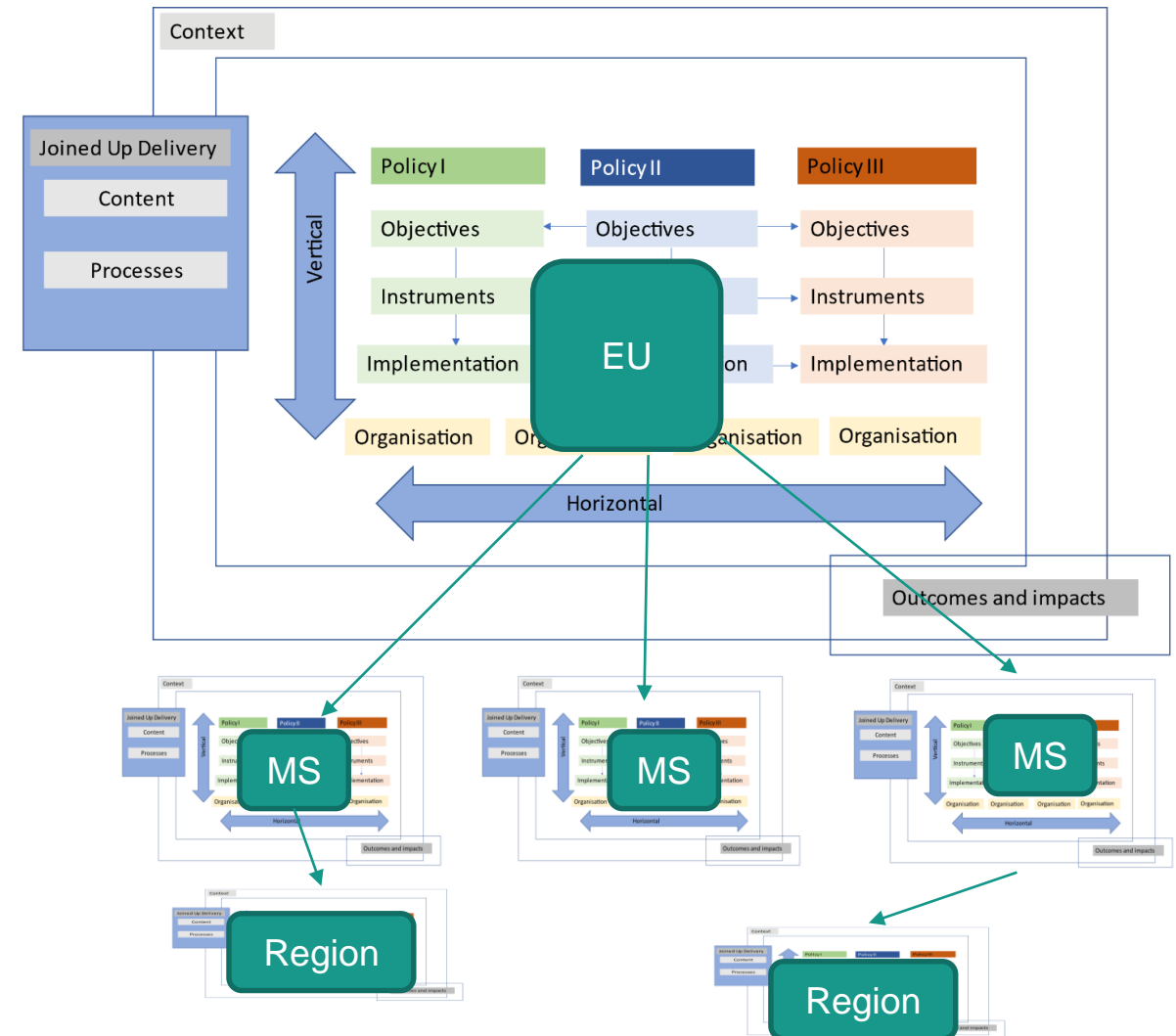
T4.3 Policy Analysis

- **EU level** analysis of 6 policy objectives and instruments completed
 - Green Deal
 - Nature Restoration Law
 - Water Framework Directive
 - Common Agricultural Policy
 - Climate Law
 - Adaptation Strategy
- Next: explore how each policy implemented in 2-3 **MS**
 - **Fi, AT, RO, Dutch** climate m/a
 - **Scottish, HU, PT** agricultural
 - **HU, Basque** Water policies
- Then: horizontal & vertical coherence with a focus on implementation



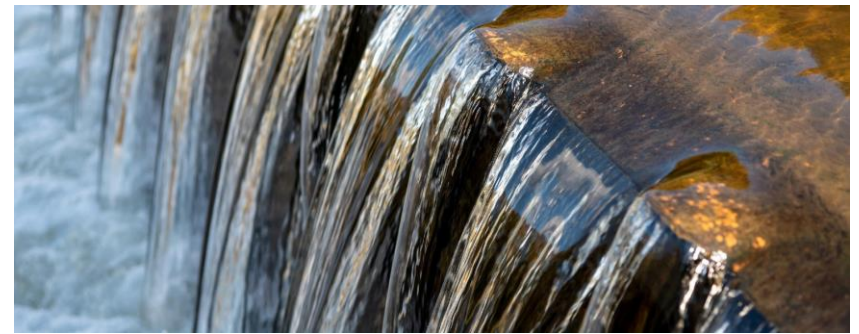
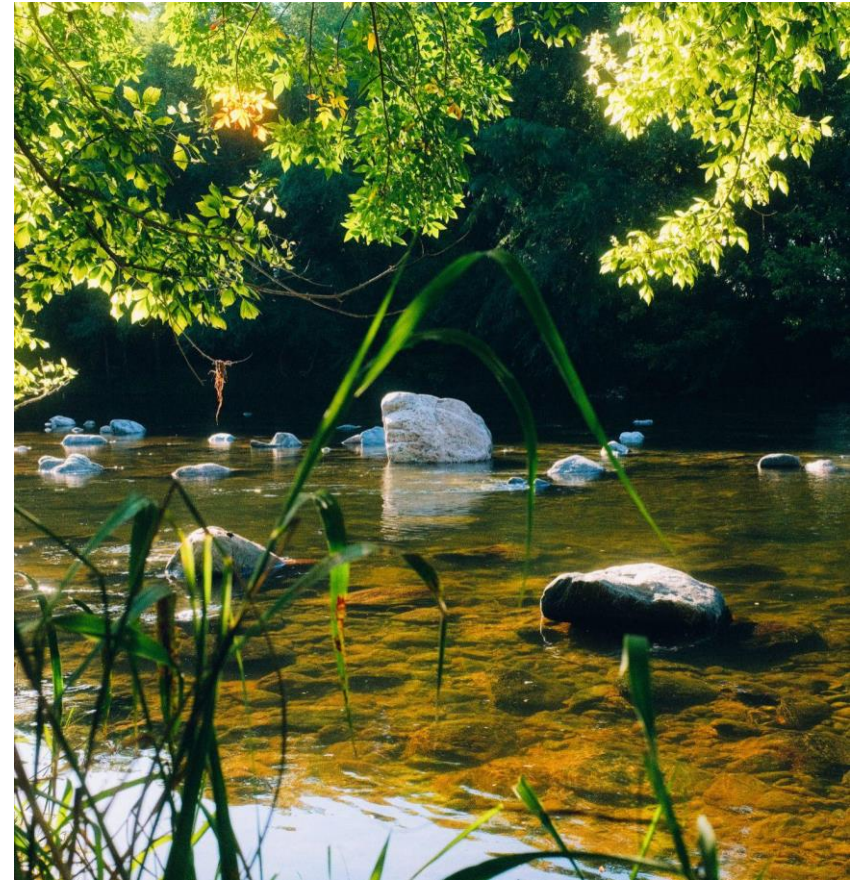
T4.3 Policy Analysis

- **CAP:** *Hungary/Tisza* and *Portugal/Sorraia* in contrast to post-Brexit plans in Scotland
- **WFD/DWD** *Spain/Basque* and *Hungary/Middle Danube 7b*
- **Climate Law** – *Finland/Kompassuo* and *Austria/Middle Danube 7a*
- **Adaptation Strategy** – *Romania/Lower Danube* and *Netherlands/Rhine*





Sectoral overview

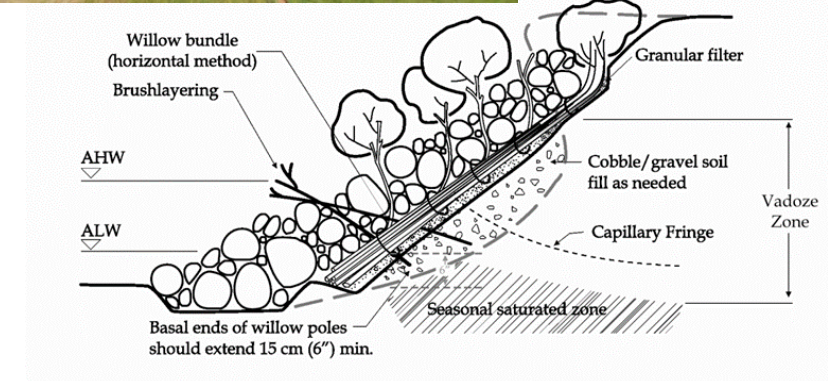


Agriculture sector

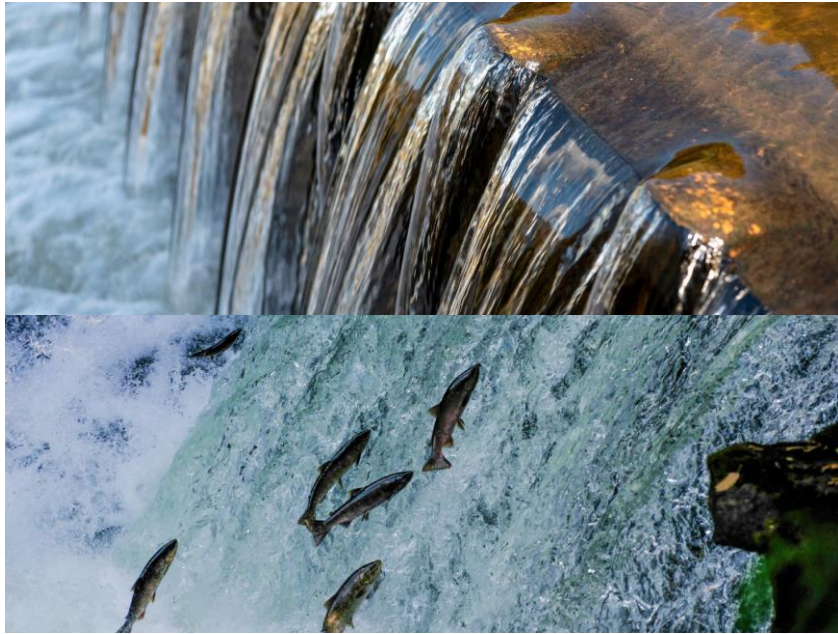
The **second Roundtable** will illustrate the benefits of NbS according to three main areas of intervention:

- **on farm NbS** - enhancing water retention (infiltration and storage capacity) - through examples of C sequestration methods in cultivated soils;
- **micro catchment area NbS** - slowing down water runoff by restoring primary surface waterflows like small rills, creeks – through examples like re-meandering of creeks with bioengineering methods;
- **NbS for river floodplain restoration** – including dam removal – through examples of MERLIN case studies (Rhine, Sorraia, Tisza)

- The Roundtable will also **build capacity and knowledge sharing** by integrating the EIP-AGRI NbS Focus Group results and participants, as well as **involving sectoral stakeholders** besides producers and policy makers.
- It will also try to **enhance the policy adaptation** by discussing how **CAP** can help at the three levels of applying NbS, and explore the appetite for **NbS certification**
- It will take place in **mid-June** and it is planned to be 2-3 hours long, including a short panel discussion with invited representatives of the policy, the agricultural and related business areas.



Hydropower sector



- Many entry points to explore how the hydropower sector can adopt NbS. In MERLIN we are focusing on **removal of existing in-river obstacles**.
- 6 cooperation points have been identified for working with the sector to understand how we can achieve this.
- The second roundtable will be on the **6th June**. It will focus on those cooperation points relating to decision-making processes – particularly **decision making entry points and tools**.
 - Our aim is to better understand how to bring about more holistic decision making within the sector, including:
 - costs and benefits
 - economic, social and ecological dimensions
 - moving from site-specific to catchment scale perspectives
- Other cooperation points focus on **financial mechanisms and cross sector partnerships** (recognising that not all in-river barriers are linked to hydropower). We will link with other aspects of MERLIN project and may organise an additional Roundtable to also advance our understanding of these important factors in with the sector.

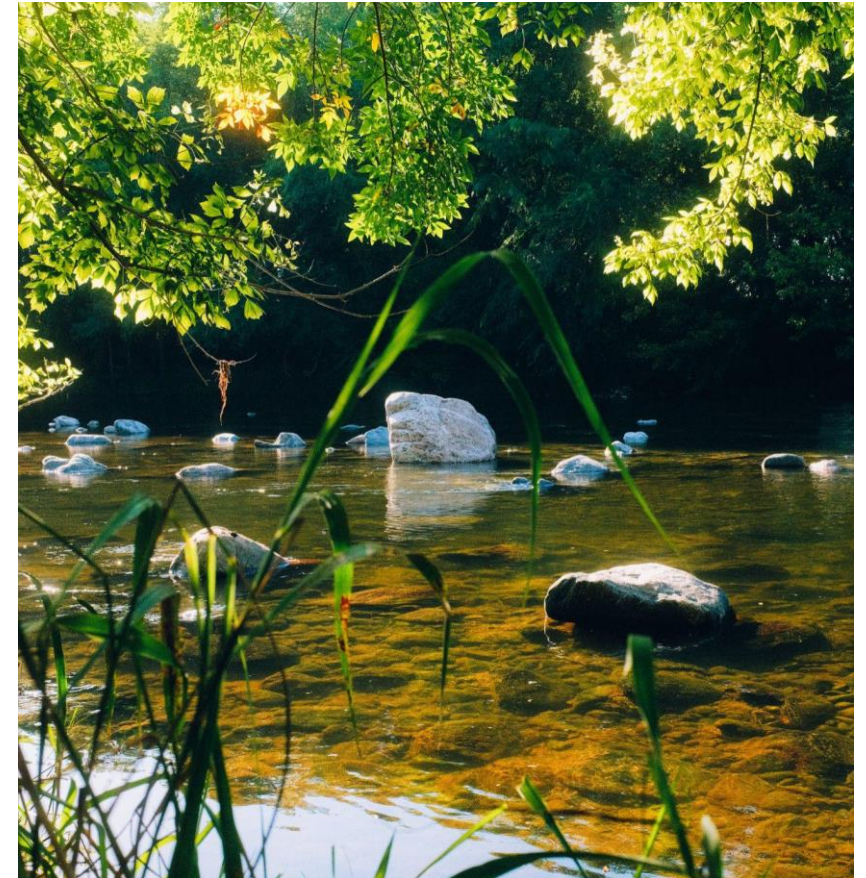
Various points have been identified for cooperation between the insurance sector and MERLIN, of which 2 were selected to be the focus of our upcoming roundtable. These are:

- **undertake joint advocacy workshops/meetings** to reflect on the main steps taken to implement current initiatives like Principles for Sustainable Insurance and Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures **to assess their biodiversity impact and dependencies,**
- **revise regulatory frameworks** to align all instruments

Hence the meeting will focus on a discussion of policy levers and comprise 3 parts, looking at the **Nature Restoration Law, Solvency II and the EU Taxonomy** for sustainable activities. It will take place on **16 May 2023** and the stakeholders to be invited include:

- insurance association,
- public entities,
- policy makers,
- Basque Country, Rhine and Romania MERLIN case studies where there is mutual interest

Insurance sector



Identified cooperation points between MERLIN - Navigation sector:

- **Evidence of applying NbS** in sustaining fairways for navigation; evidence of applying NbS for delivering integrated solutions; showcasing results from navigable waterways where restoration was implemented with favourable effects on navigation and, or included clear navigational target - on MERLIN case study sites if possible.
- **Reach and engage other actors and cross-sectoral cooperation** – river managers, water engineers and all who do the restoration, affected local communities, fairway maintenance administration bodies, etc.
- **Raise awareness of NbS** - improvement of the knowledge (training events on applying NbS in the Navigation sector) is necessary from both practical / technical and decision making aspects.

Roundtable discussion: on the **13 April**:

- **participants:** RT1 + umbrella organizations, repr from Danube, Rhine relevant SHs, EU DG-s,
- **Proposed agenda:** cooperation points of the briefing; what NbS means for navigation sector?; The roles and responsibilities of SH-s (identify synergies and differences in MS and intl waterways); identifying low hanging fruits
- further bilateral discussions might be necessary - **who can contribute** in fulfilling the cooperation points with steps to be done

Navigation sector



- Main focus in MERLIN: rewetting or revegetation of extracted peatlands **not just on-site but at a landscape scale**
- 6 cooperation points have been identified based on sectoral partners' opinion

Peat extraction sector



2nd Roundtable on the **2nd May** - we will focus on and discuss about:

- the **meaning of net zero** in the peat extraction industry
- the meaning of **upscaling to a larger landscape** and the industry's main barriers in NbS implementation
- how to **incentivise** peat extraction companies to restore extraction sites on a landscape scale with NbS, what their **benefits** are
- **policy changes and cross-sector cooperation** needed for upscaling restoration

Water supply and sanitation sector



Cooperation points that have been identified between the WSS sector and MERLIN to be addressed at the RT are:

- **Working upstream on restoration and conservation of habitats** relevant for water supply and quality – how to create and govern partnerships as large scale interventions require multiple actors
- **Policy analysis** (work by MERLIN and upcoming analysis by APE)
- **Case study example** (tbc)

It will take place on **12th June** and the stakeholders to be invited include:

- Private and public water operators
- Regulators
- Case study(ies)
- Global organisations (Alliance for Water)
- Relevant member state agencies/operators

**MERLIN will
contact
specific WWF
offices for
bilaterals**

What do others need to do?

- Remember the themes of WP4 when working
 - Links to our 6 economic sectors
 - Explicit (named) policy solutions/challenges
 - Share your wishes to COM
 - Ideas of business opportunities and adding monetary value through NbS
 - Issues of Justice & Just Transitions
 - Links to IPCC, IPBES, COP, IUCN processes
 - Help with our requests about your region or country
 - Join our RTs (meet with the sectors)
- **Thank you for the insights in advance!**

Useful links

- **Website of the project** <https://project-merlin.eu/> (tab mainstreaming about sectors)
- Background information about the **18 MERLIN CSs** - use to demonstrate practical aspects that the sectors were asking about:
- **CS factsheets:** <https://project-merlin.eu/cs-portal.html>
- **4 blog posts:**
- <https://freshwaterblog.net/2022/08/18/merlin-restoration-case-studies-large-transboundary-rivers/>
- <https://freshwaterblog.net/2022/08/04/merlin-restoration-case-studies-small-streams-and-basins/>
- <https://freshwaterblog.net/2022/06/08/merlin-restoration-case-studies-peatlands-and-wetlands/>
- <https://freshwaterblog.net/2023/04/05/nature-based-solutions-and-economic-sectors-in-freshwater-restoration-four-themes-to-strengthen-collaboration/>
- **Deliverables:** <https://project-merlin.eu/outcomes/deliverables.html>
- **James Hutton Institute's MERLIN Webpage:** www.hutton.ac.uk/research/projects/merlin-mainstreaming-ecological-restoration-freshwater-related-ecosystems

Thank you!



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