



**Final Joint Policy Recommendations  
and  
Governance Model  
of the  
Waterways Forward project**

**2012**

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## **Introduction to Waterways Forward**

Europe's network of navigable and formerly navigable inland waterways – rivers, canals and lakes – forms a multi-functional resource that contributes to the delivering of the objectives of the new European agenda as expressed in Europe 2020. Inland waterways can help deliver and integrate all the strands of Europe 2020 in terms of smart, sustainable, inclusive growth.

In the Waterways Forward (WF) INTERREG IVC project European regions adjacent to Inland Waterways coming from 11 EU countries, Norway and Serbia, gathered to explore the opportunities to reinforce the importance of Inland Waterways for regional economic development. The knowledge exchange and experience was circled around two overarching topics which are seen as enabling conditions for boosting economic, environmental and social development via individual projects: climate change and environmental protection and governance

In this paper the WF partners suggest a way forward for maximising the contribution that waterways can make to the future of Europe.

The paper concentrates on the role of the smaller regional waterways (i.e. less than Class IV), as opposed to the high capacity TEN-T network. However many of the opportunities and issues discussed are just as applicable to these larger dimension waterways.

To take advantage of this, appropriate governance structures need to be in place to facilitate waterway management and development. These need to ensure wide stakeholder involvement to maximise the opportunities arising from the multi-functional use of inland waterways. Some tested and successful Governance models have been studied by the WF project and are attached to this paper.

## **Waterways Forward outputs: making recommendations**

As a condition for funding the project partners have committed themselves to produce a series of outputs. The Paper on Policy Recommendations is the final output and also the most important one. All 11 policy recommendations are fully supported by ALL 17 WF project partners

**In the course of their work WF partners identified both supportive EU measures and some policy gaps & barriers to effective regional/local action. The gaps and barriers are dealt with in a specific paper. This paper has served as a basis for the Policy Recommendations.**

## **Policy Recommendations**

In this document WF partners set out recommendations for adjustments to EU and national, regional, local -level policy measures based on the experience and evidence gathered and discussed by the WF partners during the implementation of the project. The recommendations are drafted based upon the results of discussions during Waterways Forward Coordination Meetings and Master Classes organized in September 2011. Partners gained further experiences via the development of their Regional Action Plans (RAPs) and the Virtual debates held. The findings in the Regional Action Planning have also served as an input for these recommendations

Furthermore there has been a strong bottom up support for these recommendations. The input from all relevant policy sectors and businesses gathered in Regional Stakeholder Platforms is included which can be seen as a good indication of the wide interest in, and importance of, the topic.

In making these recommendations it is the collective aim of partners' to achieve much broader recognition of the scope to boost the socio economic potential of inland waterways to achieve sustainable regional development. Some modest changes at EU level could help to provide regions with a more consistent and supportive context for regional /local efforts, in turn enabling them to play their part in delivery of the ambitious goals set out in EU2020.

### ***Recommendation 1 - On EU policies and regulations***

The WF partners recommend that proper attention be given, within the EU institutions, to the socio/economic impact on inland waterways of EU regulations in general (e.g.the Water Framework Directive). They propose in particular that:

- Greater clarity and consistency is provided regarding the application of EU environmental legislation on inland waterways
- Greater recognition of the linking role of inland waterways in Maritime policy and measures to develop the maritime economy

The WF partners call on the European Commission:

- to prepare common guidelines (a White Paper) for the future development and management of Inland Waterways not only from a transport perspective via Naiades but focused on the added value of a multi functional use of these waterways and being a driver and a source for economic, environmental, social and technological development of adjacent regions. Support for waterway infrastructure creates attractive communities, it drives forward regeneration and it promotes waterway based business development, innovation and tourism.

## ***Recommendation 2 – on EU funding programmes***

The WF partners suggest that in future and existing funding programmes greater attention should be given to measures which would have a positive impact on the management of Inland Waterways and subsequently the socio/economic development of Inland Waterways. Funding should be linked to:

- A Europe-wide approach and funding for tackling alien invasive species
- Support and funding for the development of innovative approaches for maximising the biodiversity value of waterways, while supporting navigation and for tackling issues under the Habitats and other EU Directives.
- Support and funding for encouraging better environmental behaviour amongst recreational users of waterways and the development of more energy-efficient and less polluting / ecologically-damaging vessels
- Support for innovation in logistics systems for freight transport on smaller inland waterways e.g. vessel design, cargo handling equipment etc.
- Support for the use of new technology in managing waterway infrastructure to improve efficiency and reduce costs (e.g. remote operation of structures, mobile working etc.)
- Grant support (capital & revenue) for inland waterway freight & passenger services and for walking/cycling initiatives on waterway towpaths and banks to encourage a shift from road transport to more sustainable modes.

- the creation of more specific funding opportunities for reinforcing the role of Inland Waterways and adjacent regions for sustainable development in programmes like Intelligent Energy Europe, CIVITAS and LIFE+, EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

The WF partners:

- Recommend that representatives of the inland water management sector are included in stakeholder consultations relating to the design of regional funding initiatives at EU level.
- Recommend explicit reference, in Structural Funds programmes and EEA Grants and Norway Grants programmes from 2014, to measures which support the socio economic development of regions adjacent to inland waterways. Greater recognition is needed of the multi-functional role of waterways in delivering smart, sustainable, inclusive growth.
- Recommend specific reference in EU territorial policies to measures which highlight the importance of inland waterways for socio/economic development. In particular in all strands of INTERREG the Operational Programmes should emphasize on the challenges of inland waterways for regional development.

### ***Recommendation 3 – Initiatives for R and D***

The WF partners recommend greater attention in R&D policies and funding programmes like Horizon 2020 for:

- Support for innovation in logistics systems for freight transport on smaller inland waterways e.g. vessel design, cargo handling equipment etc. which will improve the possibilities for multi functional use
- Support for the use of new technology in managing waterway infrastructure to improve efficiency and reduce costs (e.g. remote operation of structures, mobile working etc.)
- Continued support for approaches that encourage research and development across sectors and disciplines e.g. “triple helix” and clustering including specific support for market valorisation of new technologies

## ***Recommendation 4 – EU2020 Flagship for Resource Efficiency / policy for environment***

The WF partners can deliver a considerable contribution to achieve the goals of this Flagship. This is why they promote:

- Greater awareness, recognition and valuation of the full range of ecosystems services that inland waterways deliver, including those related to climate change
- Support for initiatives to mitigate climate change – sustainable transport, renewable energy
- Support for initiatives to adapt to climate change eg. flood management.
- Support and funding for encouraging better environmental behaviour amongst recreational users of waterways and the development of more energy-efficient and less polluting / ecologically-damaging vessels
- Greater recognition of & support for the ecological value of inland waterways and also the green infrastructure as both a driver of economic growth and an environmental resource as a driver of economic growth, an environmental resource and for promoting people’s health and well-being through access to the outdoors and learning.

## ***Recommendation 5 – energy measures***

The WF partners welcome the Covenant of Mayors (COM) initiative and associated guidance published by the European Commission. They recommend the development of further guidance material on energy efficiency and renewable for COM signatory cities having inland waterways on their territory.

In this context, we welcome support for initiatives at a community and regional level that promote the use of waterways for renewable energy or climate change mitigation e.g. through small & large hydro schemes, water transfer by gravity, thermal transfer etc.

## ***Recommendation 6 – policy for transport and accessibility***

The WF partners recommend that in the EU Transport policies:

- Greater attention should be given to the special mobility/access issues associated with greater understanding and recognition of the full range of ecosystem service benefits delivered in the appraisal of water freight transport schemes and in EU / national government support for transport by waterway
- Grant support (capital & revenue) is provided for inland waterway freight & passenger services to encourage a shift from road transport
- Recognition of the green infrastructure role of waterway towpaths and banks in encouraging sustainable transport through walking & cycling, particularly in terms of creating “trunk” routes within towns & cities
- Encourage the shift of freight transport from roads to waterways by ensuring that available funding, instruments and rules support waterways transportation development in the future. Support should be granted for the building of multimodal transportation HUBs connecting different modes of transportation including inland waterways and short sea shipping, thus to provide efficient and environmentally friendly door to door transport chains
- Encourage multimodality and good hinterland connections from rivers to road and rail.
- Stress the importance of equal transportation fees for road, rail and freight in all the member countries to ensure that road, rail and freight traffic competes on the same terms.
- Encourage initiatives that support green infrastructure; green fuel development, green ship building, sustainable landscape development along waterways and measures taking the full range of the ecosystem into consideration.

### ***Recommendation 7 - policy for culture***

The WF partners note that EU funding is already allocated specifically for ‘protection and preservation of cultural heritage’. The Waterway heritage is part of the ‘cultural infrastructure’ of Europe, contributing to economic attractiveness, job opportunities and quality of life.

The WF partners:

- Recommend increased recognition in EU policy for the unique cultural heritage of Europe's waterways and to build on this heritage as a driver for economic growth and developing community capacity e.g. through tourism (linked to the EU tourism framework) regeneration of waterfronts or creation of a "sense of place".
- Recommend to promote exchanges / dialogue between inland waterway cultural operators in the context of common heritage (including countries outside the EU that have been influenced by European waterway development)
- Recommend support for the development of new & social media approaches to encourage tourism based on waterway heritage, potentially linked to existing initiatives such as the European Routes of Industrial Heritage (ERIH)

### ***Recommendation 8 - EU2020 Flagship – An agenda for new skills & jobs***

The WF partners welcome the flagship initiative an agenda for education and new skills & jobs. They call upon the European institutions to recognize the contribution that can be made to implementation of this agenda through integrated approaches for the management of Inland Waterways and adjacent Regions.

This contribution should be facilitated through:

- Support for exchanges & placements through the Lifelong Learning programmes
- Support for waterway-based social enterprises to deliver employment & training programmes associated with inland waterways, particularly those targeted at disadvantaged groups – the long-term unemployed, young people and ex-offenders
- Support for volunteering schemes, particularly those that bring the generations together.

### ***Recommendation 9 – EU2020 Territorial Pacts***

Recognizing the importance of multi-level governance for establishing and implementing successful strategies for the management and development of inland waterways and adjacent regions, including with the use of Structural Funds resources, the WF partners welcome the Committee of the Regions' proposal for Territorial Pacts framed around the EU2020 strategy. They call on national governments to provide for Territorial Pacts and

to include specific reference to the sustainable socio economic development of Inland Waterways and adjacent regions.

### ***Recommendation 10 – Promotion of inland waterways***

- Develop EU-guidelines and funding to establish a common inland waterways promotion organization, both for recreation and freight purpose, which works on public-private-basis in all EU-countries.
- Support national and international promotion organizations in providing public information and organizing political lobbying for inland waterways.
- Recognize the needs of the private sector as well as work together with them in R&D, education and consultation.
- Encourage, stimulate and support private companies in rural areas to be innovative and to find new economic activities and products focused on the different user groups of inland waterways and lakes

### ***Recommendation 11 - Tailored Governance models***

The WF partners note that it is very important to organise the management of Inland Waterways and adjacent region in such a way that all stakeholders from public and private sector are involved in policy making and implementation of measures on a structural basis. In this regard the Dutch "Aquapuncture" model could be considered as an innovative approach. However there is not one model which fits all needs. It differs per country due to differences in legal and financial systems. Innovations in financial arrangements and reducing legal obstacles are being considered as crucial elements of management and governance of Inland Waterways. In order to achieve effective economic development models for waterways the governance and management of waterways needs in many cases a cross border and transnational approach. Coordination and cooperation models should be connected to and based on the geographical situation of waterways

The favourable final governance model (central or decentral, public or private, a mixture of these) should include some basic cooperation and coordination elements which are included in the model in Annex 1.

## **Final Governance Model**

### **Developed by Thematic Group leader Governance of the project, French Inland Waterways (VNF)**

One of the aims of Waterways Forward is to set a coordinated approach toward waterways and to define how they can be better managed and developed in order to deliver benefit to region through which they pass in terms of quality of life, social and economic development.

The regional analyses, transfer visits, workshops and virtual debates organized through the project have brought to light the different local context in terms of waterway management. In some partners regions the waterway management organization is regional whereas in some other a national organization is in charge of the whole inland navigation network.

It is not possible to claim that one level or one organization would be better than another one for the management of waterway because in each case it is the local context that matter. One organization could work in a place and would not in another. Therefore it seems difficult to set up an overarching model for waterway management.

The objective of this chart is to give an overview of those two systems, regional/local, and to identify advantages and disadvantages. The aim is not to claim that an organization would be better than the other one but to try to identify the limit of each organization and how they could be improved.

The model also reveals that regardless of the level regional or national, waterway management organization share the same objectives which are the involvement of private sector, water quality and protection of the ecology and strategic stakeholder cooperation. The chart finally suggests few solutions to tackle the issues waterways management organization are facing. Those solutions reappear in the policy recommendation of the project Waterways Forward.

ANNEX 1

