



# Information for applicants



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# 1 About the European Open Rivers Programme

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## 1.1 About us

*The European Open Rivers Programme (EORP) – commonly referred to as the Open Rivers Programme - offers grants to support projects that lead to the removal of small dams and the restoration of river flow and biodiversity. It was created to restore European rivers that have become heavily fragmented due to the proliferation of man-made barriers to river flow.*

The programme was legally formed in Netherlands on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 with the creation of “Stichting European Open Rivers Programme”, which manages and implements the programme. The programme officially began operating in October 2021. It was created with funding from Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.

The day-to-day operations of the programme are managed by a small secretariat. Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

## 1.2 About this information guide

We appreciate the time and effort that is required to prepare projects and apply for funding. Therefore, we aim to be as clear as possible about what we support, how to apply, and how your application will be assessed. Please read these guidelines carefully before applying to maximise your chances of being shortlisted. These guidelines will evolve over time and will be regularly updated to ensure they are a useful and relevant tool for you.

## 1.3 Why support small dam removal?

It is widely known that rivers support some of the Earth’s richest biodiversity and provide essential ecosystem services to society. Free flowing “open rivers” provide essential habitat for wildlife that depend on flowing water, deliver sediment that keeps deltas above rising seas, and provide nutrients to fertilise floodplains and create wetlands.

Despite their invaluable contribution to the balance of earth’s natural functioning and the human reliance on this resource, freshwater ecosystems are the most threatened ecosystems in the world. One of the main contributing factors to their deterioration is fragmentation due to the presence of man-made barriers obstructing river flow. In Europe alone, over one million barriers fragment rivers, negatively impacting freshwater biodiversity, water quality and surrounding natural habitats. In fact, only one third of its rivers have ‘good ecological status’, as defined by the EU Water Framework Directive.

There is a huge potential in Europe to remove barriers and research has shown that there are at least 100,000 barriers that are abandoned or out of use. Many previous river restoration projects in Europe and abroad demonstrate that reducing fragmentation through dam removal can restore river continuity, improve biodiversity and the health of the surrounding natural habitats. Moreover, dam removal will help European countries (Member States or otherwise) achieve sustainable development goals that satisfy the UNECE Water Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive. It will also substantially contribute to the goal of opening up 25,000 km of rivers by 2030, as mentioned in the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

Finally, the programme's focus on removing 'small dams' is based on a recent assessment by the [EU AMBER project](#), that concluded that 68% of barriers in Europe are less than two metres in height and that it is primarily the small culverts, fords and weirs that cause the most fragmentation. The most cost-effective (and socially acceptable) method of restoring river flow and biodiversity is to focus on removing the many small dams, not the smaller number of large dams.

## 1.4 Vision and mission

*By 2027, the Open Rivers Programme will have enabled many thousands of kilometres of rivers to flow freely again. Where we intervene, we will help to restore natural habitats and enable river ecosystems to be more resilient to changes in climate.*

The **mission of the programme** is to restore endangered European rivers by supporting interventions that lead to the removal of dams and the restoration of river flow and biodiversity. Only then can we realize our **vision** of creating free-flowing rivers with healthy, diverse, and connected ecosystems across Europe, which are enjoyed, valued, and protected by the communities that depend on them.

The programme will work towards this vision and mission by offering three categories of grants with the majority of funds allocated to making direct impacts by removing small dams in rivers.

### Category A

- Preparatory work for the removal of one or more small dams.
- Dam removal (demolition)

### Category B

- Preparatory work for the removal of one or more small dams but dam removal costs are funded by someone else.

### Category C

- Support to enable the dam removal movement

More information on our grant types can be found in [section 3](#).

## 2 Eligibility criteria

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### 2.1 Who can apply?

We recognise that dam removal projects can involve a diverse range of project partners and contributors spanning across NGO, government, academia, and private sectors, as well as community groups and individuals. We welcome and encourage applications from diverse consortiums and collaborations. However, we have specific criteria on who can be a coordinating partner.

A **coordinating partner** is the applicant to the programme, and they will take a lead on managing the project. They will receive and manage the grant finances, sign a grant contract with the programme, and take responsibility for the effective delivery of the project. They will usually be based in the country of implementation. Non-resident coordinating organisations will need to be able to justify that their role is essential e.g. there is no suitable national coordinating organisation in the implementing country.

The following organisations are able to apply to the programme:

#### Category A and B grants

- A charitable organisation.
- An academic organisation.

A coordinating partner should have a track record of restoring rivers / ecological work and be able to demonstrate the successful implementation of related projects.

We recognize that public and private, organisations may wish to apply, as well as some community groups. We encourage their participation in projects as partners but will not accept unsolicited applications from these groups. These groups may contact the programme to explore options if they are not able to identify a suitable coordinating partner for a project.

#### Category C grants

- A charitable organisation.
- An academic organisation.

### 2.2 Summary eligibility criteria

Our full guidelines outlining what we are looking for in project submissions can be found in [section 4.2](#). This section outlines the basic criteria that all applicants must fulfil before applying to the programme.



#### **Project must be implemented in Greater Europe**

Coordinating partners must be registered in Greater Europe.

## Countries of Greater Europe

Albania	Germany	Netherlands
Andorra	Greece	Norway
Armenia	Hungary	Poland
Austria	Iceland	Portugal
Azerbaijan	Ireland	Romania
Belarus	Italy	Russia (as far East as the Urals)
Belgium	Kazakhstan (West of River Ural)	San Marino
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Kosovo	Serbia
Bulgaria	Latvia	Slovakia
Croatia	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Cyprus	Macedonia	Spain
Czechia	Moldova	Sweden
Denmark	Monaco	Switzerland
Estonia	Montenegro	Turkey
Finland	Lithuania	United Kingdom
France	Luxembourg	Ukraine
Georgia	Malta	Vatican City

Overseas territories are not included.

### Category A and B grants only



**Height of barrier is 2 metres or less\***



**Project can be completed within 12 months\***



**Local stakeholders and public administrations are broadly supportive of the proposed removal/s**

#### \* Exceptions to above:

We will consider applications for higher barriers (i.e. greater than 2 metres in height) and projects that take longer than 12 months to deliver, but support to these types of project will be in the minority. They should be exceptional projects which can demonstrate the following:

Essential: Very high positive ecological impact (see [4.2](#) for guidelines)  
 Desirable: Unique example, first of a kind, has the potential to be replicated elsewhere, has the potential to influence policy or catalyse new sources of funding.

The argument for inclusion should be carefully elaborated in Expressions of Interest. If you need to discuss your case before applying, please contact us: [applications@openrivers.eu](mailto:applications@openrivers.eu)

### 3 Grant types

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#### 3.1 Preparing for and removing small dams

##### Category A grants

Most grant awards will be in this category. They will support projects to prepare for and remove small dams in catchments that offer the highest potential for river restoration and ecosystem recovery. The grants include:

Category	Title	Description
<b>Preparatory work</b>		
A1	Catchment development	To support general project development at the <b>national level</b> in catchments offering high potential for the restoration of river flow and biodiversity. The output must be one or more dam removal projects ready for preparatory work /demolition to begin.  <u>Examples include:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Identifying and selecting potential projects.</li> </ul>
A2	Producing Feasibility studies	To support the development of essential work required to prepare for the removal of a small dam.
A3	Preparing technical design documents	
A4	Securing permissions and permits	
<b>Demolition</b>		
A5	Dam removal	Preparatory work was previously completed using funds from a different source.
A6		Preparatory work was previously completed with a grant from the programme.

##### What is not supported:

- ✘ Post dam removal restoration, unless it is expected that the dam removal will result in unavoidable negative impacts e.g. changed hydrological regime that could cause flooding elsewhere; release of invasive species.
- ✘ Part removal of a dam. The programme is only interested in the complete removal of a barrier / the full removal of the 'barrier effect'.

### **Category B grants**

The only difference from category A grants is that the programme will not support the demolition. Our early research indicated that it was sometimes possible to secure funds for demolition but not for preparatory work and this was holding back the ability for some river managers to remove a dam. The grants include:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Preparatory work</b>		
B1	Catchment development	To support the development of essential work required to prepare for the removal of a dam (removal funded by third party).
B2	Producing Feasibility studies	
B3	Preparing technical design documents	
B4	Securing permissions and permits	

### **Category C grants**

These grants will not be linked to specific removals but will support interventions that ensure that dam removal becomes more widely accepted and implemented in order to restore more rivers across Europe. They should have **Europe wide** applicability.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
C1	Capturing and disseminating knowledge on lessons and best practice	To support the analysis of existing information or the generation and dissemination of new information that fill knowledge gaps. The outputs of these grants will deliver information resources to enable evidence-based decision-making and the formulation of best-practice standards.
C2	Advocacy	To support advocacy work to further enable and promote dam removals, to mobilise the necessary resources, and to ensure that benefits of dam removal are well understood.
C3	Communications	Support targeted communications work that helps to build enthusiasm and dispel opposition towards removals, supporting public participation, demonstration of best practices and citizen science.

**Important note:** applications for category C grants cannot be submitted until 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

## 4 Application process and guidelines

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### 4.1 Application stages and timing

The programme will implement two application rounds each year with calls for Expressions of Interest (EoI) in November and May. The stages are:

- Applicant prepares and submits an EoI (6-7 weeks from the call for EoI to the deadline for submissions). These are simple outlines of a project.
- Programme review of EoI (up to 4-5 weeks)
- Shortlisted projects invited to prepare and submit a Proposal (6-7 weeks). The proposal requires more detail and supporting evidence.
- Programme review of Proposals (up to 7 weeks)
- Grant Awards for selected projects will usually be made in May and November.

**Next call for EoI**

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Deadline for submission of EoI**

**5<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### 4.2 What we are looking for

The fundamental aim of the programme is to remove small dams from rivers and to make rivers free-flowing again. The desired outcome is ecological restoration – to restore the diversity and abundance of life in rivers and their surrounding ecosystems. Projects will be scored on their potential to achieve the following:

#### Categories A and B grants



#### **Maximise the potential for ecological gain**

This is the number one goal of the programme, and our approach will be to take every possible step to select projects that achieve this. This means that we are more likely to select projects in areas of low fragmentation where it will be cheaper to achieve ecological restoration. We encourage projects that demonstrate the following criteria:

- Potential to open up large areas of previously fragmented river – kilometres gained upstream and downstream.
- Potential to restore rare, threatened, or endangered habitats or species i.e. river of significant ecological importance.
- Restore ecological and hydromorphological processes.
- Restore connectivity between habitats (importance of considering longitudinal, lateral, and vertical connectivity).
- Help to ensure that rivers are more resilient to short and longer-term changes (such as climate fluctuations).

- Consider **whole river basins** and justify the relevance of each proposed dam removal/s in opening up a catchment.
- Extent to which the removal contributes to a wider restoration plan at the catchment level and Good Ecological Status.
- Demonstration that River Basin Management Plans have been consulted and have informed the dam removal approach.
- How the project will contribute to the [EU Biodiversity strategy](#). EC guidance on the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy River restoration targets – including on free-flowing rivers - is expected to be published before the end of 2021.
- Provide other benefits to riparian ecology.

The programme is more likely to support **multiple dam removals** that open up large stretches of river and impact whole river basins than isolated single removals. The value/rationale behind each proposed removal within a catchment should be articulated in proposals. Single dam removals are less likely to be supported unless it can be proven that they will have a significant ecological impact / open up a large area of river and/or there is no justification to remove other dams in the catchment.

**Preparatory projects** should demonstrate that their successful completion will result in the dam/s being ready for removal. i.e. we are unlikely to support preparatory projects if there is uncertainty over the dam/s ever being able to be removed.

For help on how to select barriers within a catchment, [see the following report](#), written for the Open Rivers Programme.



**Achievable in short timeframes and relatively low risk**

The programme is unlikely to support controversial or risky projects. It is likely that most dam removals will be of obsolete or abandoned structures.

Our aim will be to identify projects that can be implemented within a year, and which have the support of local administrations and communities. Ideally, consents and authorisations will have been secured or will be able to be secured within a year. Projects that take longer than one year could be considered if they are exceptional in terms of their potential for ecological restoration.

Applicants should demonstrate that they have consulted with river basin managers in the design of the project.

- ✓ **Stands out as unique and important**
  - Exceptional or unique projects that have wider catalysing impacts.
  - Helps to embed dam removal and dam prevention into policies, planning, research, implementation guidelines, best practices, monitoring and evaluation.
  - Encourage others to fund dam removal.
  - Encourage others to remove dams.
  - Demonstrates a new or innovative technique.
  - Has a strong positive economic or social impact.

- ✓ **Demonstrates value for money**

We wish to remain flexible and fund the most compelling projects that show the best potential to meet the desired outcomes of the programme. Therefore, we do not publicise minimum and maximum funding amounts, but we expect applicants to demonstrate value for money e.g. projects that have a low cost but a high ecological benefit, or where co-funding is secured.

#### Category C grants

Projects will be scored ([see section 5](#)) on their potential to achieve the following:

- ✓ Fills a major gap / identified need.
- ✓ Enables the programme and other stakeholders (e.g. river basin managers or practitioners) to be more effective at removing dams and restoring rivers.
- ✓ Provides opportunities to learn lessons and advance knowledge that is of wider relevance and applicability.

### **4.3 How to apply**

#### **1. Login to the programme's online application portal.**

Go to the programme's [Grant Management System \(GMS\)](#)

##### New users

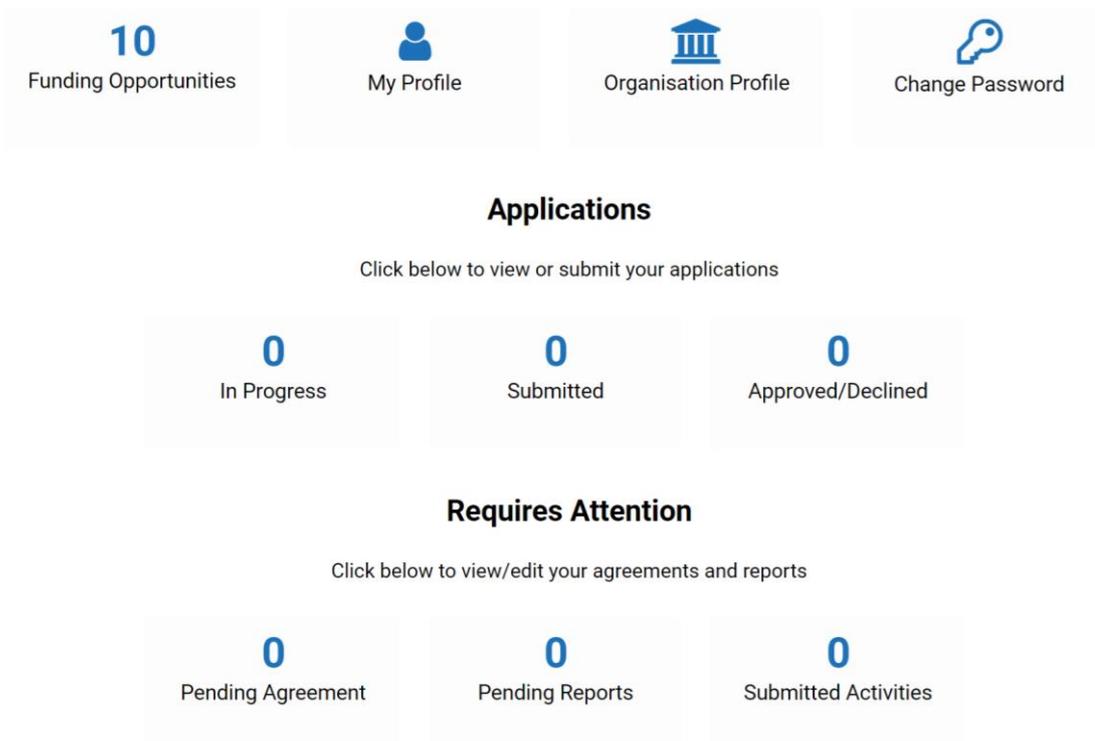
Click on the 'register here' button and complete all the required fields. You will then receive an email with a link to create a password.

##### Existing users

Login with the email and the password that you selected when you signed up.

## 2. Understanding the system

Your application portal starts with a homepage. You will see a page similar to the example below:



From this page, you can click on any of the blue text as follows:

### **Funding Opportunities**

Apply for a grant and see all of the grant types that are currently inviting applications from.

### **My Profile / Organisation profile**

Access and edit your own profile / or that of your organisation

### **Change Password**

### **In Progress / submitted / approved / declined**

Contains applications that are currently being drafted, have been submitted, have been approved / declined by the programme.

### **Requires attention**

This section applies to grantees and highlights when an action needs to be taken to sign a contract, submit a progress report. It includes a record of previously submitted activities

### 3. Complete the application.

From your portal, click on **funding opportunities**.

Click on **Apply Now** for the grant that you wish to apply for.

Further guidance on completing application forms:

- Every question will explain what is required / provide useful information to guide your answer. Please also ensure you have fully read this document which provides additional information.
- **You can apply for several different types of preparatory grant within one application.** For example, you could choose to click on the **Apply Now** button to apply for an A2 grant to conduct a feasibility study. At the start of the application, you can also check boxes to apply for funding to produce Technical Designs (A3) or permits (A4).
- **You can apply for multiple dam removals within one application** – this will be encouraged where it can be proven that a prioritisation exercise has been undertaken and there are strong ecological benefits associated with each proposed removal (compared to those that were not chosen). You will need to provide details for every dam.
- **You cannot apply for multiple grants in different categories** e.g. (A, B and C) in one application.
- **You cannot apply for preparatory and demolition grants within an A category application.** If you need to apply for both, first apply for a grant to complete preparatory work. Once this grant has been completed, you can apply for a demolition grant. This is one of the reasons that there are regular (two per year) calls for project submissions.
- You can save incomplete applications and return at a later date.
- You will not be able to submit your application until all sections are completed and mandatory uploads are created.

#### 4. Submit your application

- Press the **submit** button at the bottom of the application before the advertised deadline. Please note that the system will not allow you to submit once the deadline has passed!
- After you have submitted your application you will receive an automated response from the programme management team acknowledging receipt of your application.
- Once your application has been submitted for review, you will not be able to make any adjustments.

Should you run into any issues using the online Grant Management System please contact us: [applications@openrivers.eu](mailto:applications@openrivers.eu)

#### **Important note for coordinating partners who are awarded a grant**

If you are successful in securing a grant from the programme at the end of the application process, you will receive a Grant Award Letter from us. This letter will be signed by both the programme and the coordinating partner. There are several important points to note about implementing a grant from the programme.

- We require all materials resulting from the grant to be made publicly available for free via the internet. This includes text, images, audio, and video.
- You should be suitably insured to implement the grant. The programme will not be liable for any claims, fines, penalties, costs, expenses, losses, damages, and liabilities howsoever arising in the performance of the project.

#### **For dam removal (demolition grants) only**

- We will require you to confirm that there are no known issues that might jeopardise the river from remaining free flowing once the dam/s have been removed.

## 4.4 Top tips for a successful application

### What will help make my application successful?

-  **Submit on time**  
We will not extend the deadline or accept late applications.
-  **Follow the guidelines**  
Use this document as a resource to enhance your application and increase your chances of success.
-  **Cat A + B only: Tell us why your project is ecologically significant**  
Our number one aim is to support projects that will open up rivers and achieve a long-term positive ecological impact. Before submitting your application make sure that you have made it really clear how your project will benefit nature and why we should support it.
-  **Cat A + B only: Tell us how you have strategically selected your small dams**  
We are looking for evidence that small dams projects have been carefully selected to maximise ecological impact at the catchment level. We are less likely to support projects that appear to have been randomly selected without a justification.
-  **Tell us what is interesting or unique about your project**  
Explain to us why your project is worth supporting and any special features that we should consider in our review.
-  **Is it value for money?**  
When we review applications, we will consider which projects offer the best value for money. How can we most effectively achieve our aims with the available funds? For cat. A and B grants: low-cost projects with high ecological impacts will score highly. Costs should be justified and relevant. For cat. C grants, why is the proposal significant and what will its impact be for the European dam removal movement?
-  **Tell your story in a straightforward way**  
We receive many applications and are unable to review supplementary materials that are not requested. Clear and concise applications are easier to review, e.g. write in short sentence and paragraphs, list or bullet activities, outputs and outcomes. Try to avoid jargon or acronyms that might not be known by the reviewer.

**Ensure the budget and logframe are correct**

Ensure that the full timeframe is presented from the start of the project to its completion. Ensure that all costs are in Euros. Provide a full breakdown of costs.

**Review your application before submitting it**

The Grant Management System will allow for a draft application to be saved and so you can review it at a later date before submitting.

Is your information correct? For cat. A and B grants, are the GPS coordinates accurate? Is the distance to the next barrier correct? We will review all proposals on Google Maps for accuracy and to consider any unforeseen risks.

Consider asking someone who does not know your organisation to read your proposal – does it make sense? Can they remember the key points?

What is not likely to score highly?

- Projects that take many years to make an impact.
- Expensive projects that have a low ecological impact.
- Projects that do not meet the minimum eligibility criteria.

## 5 Assessment process

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### Grant Selection Panel

Every EoI and Proposal will be reviewed by the programme's independent Grant Selection Panel (GSP), which is composed of experienced professionals with technical expertise in various fields including, but not limited to, dam removal specialists, engineers, geomorphologists, ecologists, legal experts, advocacy, and communications specialists. The assessment process is as follows:

#### 1. Eligibility checks

All projects will be checked to ensure they meet the summary eligibility criteria. This will include checks on coordinating partners to confirm their legitimacy and their ability to coordinate the proposed project.

#### 2. Scoring by GSP members

Scores are assigned to answers according to the strength of the answer against the criteria presented in the application form and the overall goals of the programme. Scores from all reviewers are added together and a final average score is obtained. The main scoring areas include:

- Ecological potential / length of river made free flowing.
- Cost-benefit – the cost against the expected ecological outcomes.
- Viability – the ease of the project being completed / degree of risk.
- Best practices - unique or showcase examples, the 'wow factor'.

#### 3. Final assessment

The highest scoring projects that fit within our budget will be shortlisted. Several additional factors are considered when shortlisting projects. These include:

- The [DAMROS score](#) (Dam Removal Opportunity Score) for a catchment (where relevant): this draws on data from a study carried out for the programme to indicate the attractiveness of a river catchment for dam removal. It considers ten metrics that capture four aspects important for dam removal.
- Supporting a balance of projects across Europe to ensure that at least 50% of funds are directed to less economically developed regions and not just to countries that are more advanced in preparing projects for funding. Gross Domestic Product figures are used to assist this analysis.
- Several broad environmental indicators such as National Biodiversity Index, and area of land within a protected area.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given an explanation for why their project/s were not selected and whether they could re-apply if the project is developed, or not.

**Thank you for reading this guide.  
We wish you the best of luck with your application.**

## Annex 1: Glossary of key terms used by the programme

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### **Biodiversity**

The diversity of living species including animals, plants and their habitats.

### **Dam / small dam**

The term 'dam' is used by the programme to refer to any man-made barrier that has been constructed transversely across a river to alter its flow and thus the transport of sediments, or the movement of organisms. Examples include dams, weirs, culverts, fords, and sluices. The programme commonly refers to small dams to include structures of two metres in height or less.

### **Fish ladder**

A series of ascending pools of running water constructed so that fish may swim upstream, either around or over a dam.

### **Free flowing river / open river**

A river that is largely unaffected by human-made changes to its flow and connectivity. Water, silt, and other natural materials can move freely, and fauna can swim up and down stream at will. The river itself can swell and shrink naturally, flow at an organic volume and rate, and replenish groundwater sources. Free-flowing rivers are not necessarily completely untouched and devoid of human presence – they may support rich livelihoods for communities. They are the freshwater equivalent of wilderness areas.

### **Good Ecological Status**

Under the European Union's (EU) Water Framework Directive, the vast majority of EU rivers, lakes, wetlands, streams, groundwater, coastal and transitional waters are required to reach good health – defined as "Good Ecological Status" – by 2027 at the very latest. All elements that contribute to a healthy, functioning freshwater ecosystem are considered within this definition, including whether it is *biodiversity*-rich, and whether its hydrological characteristics and the chemical characteristics are in order.

### **Riparian**

Relating to, living, growing, or located on the banks of a stream.

### **River basin**

The area of land from which all surface run-off and spring water flows through a sequence of streams, lakes, and rivers into the sea at a single river mouth, estuary, or delta. It comprises one or more individual catchments.

### **River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)**

These plans are a requirement of all EU Member States under the EU's water legislation. They outline the plans of a government to achieve its objectives, and are an effective tool for achieving the protection, improvement, and sustainable use of freshwater across the EU.

### **Riverine**

Living in, growing in, or located in a river or stream.

### **River catchment**

An area of land where water collects when it rains, often bounded by hills. As the water flows over the landscape it finds its way into streams and down into the soil, eventually feeding the river.

### **River restoration**

The process of managing rivers to reinstate natural processes in order to restore biodiversity.

### **Water body**

Under the Water Framework Directive this is a manageable unit of surface water, being the whole (or part) of a stream, river or canal, lake or reservoir, transitional water (estuary) or stretch of coastal water.

### **Water quality**

The physical (e.g. suspended solids, turbidity, temperature), chemical (eg acidity, dissolved oxygen, pollution) and biological (eg organic matter) characteristics of water.

### **Watershed**

All the land drained by a given river and its tributaries.

## Annex 2: Glossary of concepts and terms used in the application process

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### Due diligence

Refers to the detailed measures undertaken by the coordinating partner to ensure that a dam removal project or preparatory work for a dam removal has been suitably prepared and is viable. Measures should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the project and include at least the following: a) engagement with local communities to ensure that there is acceptance for the removal and no known reasons for any resistance that may disrupt the removal b) engagement with all relevant local administration/s to secure their approval and support for the removal e.g. issuing permits c) exploration of any legal obstacles which may prevent a removal d) all relevant feasibility work to ensure that the removal can be completed safely, effectively and as per agreed budget e) evidence that a strong project team is in place that will effectively deliver the project project/s.

### Europe

We refer to Europe using the geographic definition which stretches as far as the Ural River and Caspian Sea in the east and the Greater Caucasus range and the Black Sea, with its outlets, the Bosphorus, and Dardanelles, in the south. Based on that division, parts of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Russia are included.

### Feasibility studies

The collection of data to enable the full viability of a dam removal proposal to be assessed. The outcome of feasibility studies supported by the programme should be a strong likelihood of a dam being ready for demolition. Examples of feasibility studies include:

- **Ecological:** assessment of species (e.g. diadromous, endangered) and habitats (e.g. wetlands) that might benefit from dam removal; collation of management plans for ecological management of watershed; assessment of presence / absence of invasive species; review of ecological sensitivity (ecological resilience and the ability for species and ecosystems to recover) following removal.
- **Environmental:** collection of data e.g. water samples to assess temperature, chemistry; assessment of sediment quality (e.g. contaminants) and quantity; magnitude and frequency of river flow to assess flood risks.
- **Geographical/locational:** nearby infrastructure/properties/utilities

- **Political:** anything not covered within grant area A4 – securing permissions and permits
- **Legal:** who owns the dam; are they willing to sell/have their dam removed; liability issues from removal; water rights in place; are permits required to remove the dam?
- **Economic:** cost benefit analysis for local economy; consideration of costs and source of funds for subsequent stages of work.
- **Social:** stakeholder engagement including consultation with local communities; public health and safety issues; consideration of aesthetic/sentimental value.
- **Historical:** consultation on historical / archaeological issues of note.

An outcome of the feasibility stage could be that a removal project is not viable, but most projects should aim to mitigate any potential negative impacts with careful planning.

### **Financing from other sources**

The programme strongly encourages proposals that demonstrate the existence of co-financing or the ability to leverage additional funds e.g. feasibility studies funded by the programme that enables a third party (any other funder) to support a dam removal.

### **Kilometres of river 'opened up'**

This refers to the distance between the proposed small dam removal project and the distances upstream and downstream to the next barrier. This may also be referred to as *linear connected area* or *functional length*. In order to calculate the distance, all barriers must be considered. This could include other man-made barriers such as fish passes and also natural barriers e.g. a waterfall.

### **Long term sustainability**

In the context of this programme, a dam removal should result in opening up the stretch of river permanently. Project proposals that demonstrate measures that will guarantee long-term sustainability will be strongly favoured e.g. legal protections for river to remain open, river protected from any new developments within a local management plan.

## Outcomes

Outcomes differ from outputs. We refer to outcomes as the consequence of a small dam being moved. Examples could include:

### Ecological

- Change in sediment load.
- Increased abundance of migratory fish (good indicator of river quality).
- Increase in diversity and abundance of riparian species.
- Increase in abundance of keystone species.
- Ecosystems restored (potential to use aerial photos to review riverine and riparian habitats).
- Ecological status (according to WFD indicators) improved.

### Social/economic

- Positive impacts on surrounding economy
- Positive impacts on surrounding communities

### Enabling

- Impact of the programme on catalysing the wider movement.
- Impact of the programme on enabling others to obtain funding for dam removal.
- National policies developed or improved to support dam removal.

## Risks

Risks are present before, during and after a dam removal project and can usually be categorised as ecological, environmental, economic, infrastructural, social, political, legal, or financial. We refer to risks as the future uncertainty relating to a) a dam removal project coming to fruition e.g. high likelihood of local opposition which prevents a permit being issued, b) the dam removal taking place as planned, e.g. delays in demolition, costs end up being double the forecast c) unintended outcomes e.g. flood downstream, coordinating partner sued for damages. All risks need to be carefully considered and mitigation strategies proposed.

## Significance for the ecological restoration of the river and/or adjacent ecosystems

Dam removals will be considered significant for the ecological restoration of the river if they open up large areas of previously fragmented river and/or contribute positively to the programme's targets by:

- Increasing the diversity and abundance of riparian species;
- Increasing the abundance of migratory fish;
- Restoring previously damaged ecosystems;
- Improving the ecological status of a river (as categorised under the Water Framework Directive).

The location of a dam within the river basin and its location with respect to other dams in the river basin will also affect the significance of the removal for the ecological restoration of the river.

### **Support from local community**

Given the important role that rivers play for everyone living adjacent to them, it is vital that there is broad community support in place for the dam removal and that efforts have been undertaken to identify and test the levels of support. Local community involvement is essential from a project's inception and throughout the removal process and any concerns that may jeopardise the dam removal and the opening up of the river should be alleviated. The local community could include the dam owner, local residents, government, environmental regulatory agencies, water companies, NGOs, farmers, other landowners, and private companies. Those involved in the removal process can include policy makers, government advisors, scientists, NGOs, funders, consulting companies and citizen groups.

### **Support from local administration**

This is an essential part of any dam removal project, and all relevant institutions should be identified and approached. Permits issued by a local authority are usually required for dam removal. The permitting process often significantly guides the procedures that can be implemented during removal. For example, regulations may specify whether or not heavy equipment can be operated in the river channel.