NARROW

Narratives on Restored Water

DURATION
01.03.2022 - 31.03.2025

TOTAL GRANT
€ 532,044

MORE INFORMATION
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SOCIAL NETWORKS
@Narrow_Waters

WEBSITE
https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/projects/narrow

https://www.slu.se/narrow

http://www.snowchange.org/narratives-on-restored-water/

PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

Coordinator: Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden

Snowchange Cooperative, Lehtoi, Finland

Geography and Sustainability, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

Global Protected and Conserved Areas, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Gland, Switzerland

CONTEXT

NARROW will examine effective nature conservation and climate change mitigation led by local communities. This will be done by looking at restoration, rewilding, biodiversity, greenhouse gas flux (GHG) and carbon storage of Swedish and Finnish inland waters, wetlands and adjacent meadows and forests. Different sectors of society (e.g. local communities, including Saami people, academics and administrative actors) will be involved. NARROW will examine the success of these locally led restoration projects by bringing together social (oral histories, narratives, values) and ecological (GHG, biodiversity measurements) methods. Ultimately, NARROW will ask the following questions: what are the ecological, cultural, social and spiritual values that inspire local communities to restore and protect different inland water-land systems? Why are they important and how are such values determined and reflected in national and international policy contexts?
Two interrelated hypotheses are posted. The first hypotheses is that diverse, inclusive governance is essential for long term conservation outcomes, this includes local participation and locally led governance. The second is that international environmental targets can be met in the long-term through their various local strategies including restoration, diverse governance situations and their vitality. In this way, NARROW improve the understanding of how effectiveness of local participation and governance contributes to achieving biodiversity targets.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

NARROW will study the governance contexts of different sites in Finland and Sweden, building on the hypothesis that local communities and their contextualisation is essential for effective and equitable conservation. Interviews and dialogue workshops will be performed in order to seek local access to formal power structures. Through NARROW, the changes in biodiversity and emissions of greenhouse gases in the sites, with an emphasis on cultural keystone species will be assessed. This assessment will primarily rely on existing data and be complemented with data collection. Local knowledge

and values regarding local areas and natural resources will also be analysed. Using narrative research, and "braided knowledge" production, we assess change in specific locations, cultural settings and home areas. These results will then be analysed and linked up with international OECM (*other effective area-based conservation measures*) guidelines (to understand governance vitality and effectiveness. These results will also be disseminated in national to international policy arenas, e.g. the Swedish Mångfaldskonferensen, and the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

OUTCOMES AND EXPECTED IMPACTS

Several research questions will be answered by NARROW that will contribute to biodiversity conservation at a local, national and international level:

- How do the different governance structures and processes involve local communities and enable them to take decisions for restoration? Who takes decisions, why and how?
- Can we demonstrate added value for biodiversity and ecosystem services through community-led restoration? What is the role of cultural keystone species?
- In addition to the governance data and the biological data, what are the key narratives of "new natures" manifesting in the local places? What role do cultural keystone species play? How do local people express new relationships and values that emerge through restoration and rewilding?
- What is the government vitality and long-term effectiveness of the five sites, and how is this related to the agency, knowledge and narratives of the local actors? How applicable and relevant are the IUCN assessment guidelines to the different local situations and are there lessons learnt from these areas that can be used for further development of these guidelines?
- How can local perspectives inform and influence regional and global policy? Can global policies help to defend, support and recognise local communities?

PROJECT CONTRIBUTION TO POLICIES AND/OR SOCIETY

At the local level, NARROW will make a strong case for integrating views, voices, perspectives and narratives of local communities as key factors in achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes. At the national level, NARROW will engage with Convention on Biological Diversity focal points and report to the World Databases on Protected Areas and OECMs. At the EU level, the results will influence EU policymaking and EU Member States as the target to protect 30% is likely to be included in National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans. At the international level, NARROW will suggest improvements to the OECM global guidelines.

EXPERIMENT, CASE STUDIES

Our study sites are connected to inland waters. We will focus on five study areas:
Koitajoki basin in North Karelia, Salojenneva wetland in Western Finland and Näätämö basin, a Saami home area in Lapland (Finland), and
Gredelby pastures/Trunsta marsh and the Voxnadalen Biosphere Reserve, including the Sässman area of Voxnan River, with a lake, wet meadows and pastures (Sweden).
We will in these areas conduct interviews and dialogue workshops with the local actors, measurements of greenhouse gas emissions, and biodiversity observations.

FUNDERS

- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Sweden
- Finnish Academy of Sciences (AKA), Finland
- Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Switzerland

Rewilding area of Salojenneva in western Finland.

biodiversa+
European Biodiversity Partnership

Water JPI

2020-2021 Call for proposals

Conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity, including a focus on aquatic systems.

Biodiversa

Created in 2005, Biodiversa evolved into the European Biodiversity Partnership Biodiversa+ in 2021, now gathering 74 research programmers and funders and environmental policy actors from 36 countries.

Since 2008, Biodiversa has launched 11 calls and has funded 147 transnational research projects selected both for their scientific excellence and societal, policy relevance and quality of stakeholder engagement, for a total amount of 270 million euros (including ca. 179 million euros directly raised by the Biodiversa partners and the European Commission).

To further strengthen the European Research Area on biodiversity, Biodiversa has developed a great diversity of activities from planning and supporting research and innovation on biodiversity through a shared strategy, annual joint calls for research projects and capacity building activities, setting up a network of harmonised schemes to improve monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe, contributing to high-end knowledge for deploying Nature-Based Solutions and valuation of biodiversity in the private sector, ensuring efficient science-based support for policy-making and implementation in Europe and strengthening the relevance and impact of pan-European research on biodiversity in a global context.

For more information: www.biodiversa.org

Water JPI

The Joint Programming Initiative on "Water challenges for a changing world" is aiming to tackle the ambitious grand challenge of "Achieving sustainable water systems for a sustainable economy in Europe and abroad". The Water JPI was launched in December 2011 and has since then assembled a cohesive group of 20-member countries, five associated countries, three observers, plus the European Commission. The initiative has developed a high-level operational partnership for implementing joint activities to address water challenges, with a shared vision of "together for a water secure world" and a shared mission for jointly enabling 'smart' water solutions for a changing world.

The Water JPI developed a robust Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda that is updated in 5-year cycles, which sits under the Water JPI vision and constitutes the roadmap for future water-related RDI actions. Since 2013, the Water JPI has launched seven joint calls and has funded 110 transnational research projects selected both for their scientific excellence and impact, for a total grant of over 88 million euros (directly raised by Water JPI partners and the European Commission) and ca. 16 million euros directly raised by Water JPI partners without support from the European Commission. The Water JPI also implemented other joint activities including the implementation of two international knowledge hubs, two thematic annual programming actions and a transfer project in an effort to reinforce international cooperation in RDI to address global water challenges.

For more information: www.waterjpi.eu

BiodivRestore

In October 2020, Biodiversa and the Water JPI joined forces to launch a programme named BiodivRestore for supporting international research efforts for the conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity, including a focus on aquatic systems. Supported by the European Commission as an ERA-NET COFUND, this programme will run for five years, until September 2025.

BiodivRestore consists of a joint call for international research projects, co-funded by the European Commission and a set of other activities addressed to researchers, non-academic stakeholders and research programmers of this domain. These activities include networking and capacity building events for researchers, as well as dedicated support and events for the engagement of stakeholders and for the uptake of research results including in non-academic realms. Building on previous Biodiversa and Water JPI funded projects and on contributions from BiodivRestore, scientific foresight work will also be performed, aiming to identify new research frontiers, gaps and priorities for the conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity.

The ERA-NET Cofund BiodivRestore "Promoting and implementing joint programming to reinforce transnational research for the conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity, including a focus on aquatic systems" has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No 101003777.