

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL WETLANDS

A WIN-WIN SOLUTION



Summary

Construction of multi-functional wetlands is a cost-effective environmental tool that delivers multiple benefits to several levels in society. It is a good example of a win-win solution with a high potential for realizing current and future cost-efficient environmental schemes and measures.

Therefore, the multi-functional wetlands are a valuable and important measure for complying with EU directives such as the Water Framework Directives, the Nitrates Directive and the Habitat and Birds Directive.

Main Benefits

General aspects

- » Nutrient retention of diffuse pollution from agriculture and recycling of nutrients.
- » Drought mitigation and flood prevention.
- » Increased biodiversity and habitat restoration.
- » Production (e.g. biomass, fish, crayfish, ducks).
- » Social benefits (e.g. hunting, fishing).

Economic/job creation

- » Benefits for farmers in areas where irrigation water is limiting production and/or crop choice.
- » Decreased risk of flooding and crop failure.
- » New business opportunities in rural areas (e.g. fishing tourism, hunting).

Innovative aspects

- » Multi-functional wetlands well developed in Sweden and have high potential for increased use in Europe.
- » The Aquarius pilot showed the importance of active cooperation between different organisations.

Boosters for Implementation

A good cooperation between four important levels of organisations:

- » Farmers and farmers organisations (the end users)
- » Advisory organisations and consultants (disseminators and mediators)
- » Authorities and decision makers (municipalities, county administrations and governmental agencies)
- » Research organisations (universities and R&D institutes)

Barriers for Further Implementation

- » Not all relevant organisations in society might be involved in the projects.
- » The end users (farmers) are not persuaded or do not see any benefits for them even though they are involved in the projects.
- » In some cases legal issues and/or administrative processes are unnecessary barriers for wetland construction.

How to Get Over Barriers

- » Make sure that all relevant organisations work together from the beginning.
- » Invest in key persons among the end users who act as ambassadors for the idea of multi-functional wetlands.
- » Make sure that legal obstacles and the administrative processes are not hindering wetland construction unintentionally.

Policy Recommendations

- » Increased use of multi-functional wetlands in the EU should be promoted by active policy decisions.
- » Active promotion and information to all four levels of organization mentioned above in other EU countries.
- » Create an overview of the legal and administrative processes related to the construction of wetlands.
- » Promote the use of multi-functional wetlands as an efficient measure in scope of the Water Framework Directive (water quality enhancement) and the Flood Directive (mitigation of floods and droughts).

More Information

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