

REWET Training of Trainers event

NRL - Round Tables Summary & Integration



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1 Scope of the document

Following the Training of Trainers session at the 4th REWET Consortium Meeting in Seville, the Round Table discussions were organised to create a fruitful and informative exchange on the three major pillars identified as critical to meeting the Nature Restoration Law's objectives: Financing restoration projects, Social engagement and Policy involvement.

This document aims to concisely capture and outline the key takeaways from each distinct conversation, focussing on the primary connections among the three pillars in terms of the identified challenges, requirements, and solutions.

2 Key Takeaways

2.1. Challenges

It's interesting to note that, despite the seeming differences between the three key topics discussed at the roundtable discussions, participants agreed that they share many common difficulties that must be handled by the new NRL.

Some common challenges are:

- a) Insufficient engagement with local communities and key stakeholders:
 - i. Financing challenges: Participants agree on the importance of improving communication with those affected by restoration projects, including landowners, the general public, companies, and lawmakers. These groups frequently express doubt about the economic benefits they may derive from such projects, and they question whether there will be a tangible return on investment over time.
 - ii. Social perspective: This scepticism extends to doubts about the relevance and impact of restoration on stakeholders' lives, often stemming from a lack of awareness and information. During the social roundtable, it was evident that stakeholders might not recognize the importance of restoration due to insufficient knowledge dissemination.
 - iii. Policy implications: Communication gaps also influence policy; if local communities are unconvinced of the benefits of nature restoration, there is little motivation for governments and policymakers to exert additional effort towards objectives that lack public demand. This is where the need for experts and educators becomes crucial—as highlighted in the discussions—to develop

and share evidence and knowledge that can inform and support policy decisions.

- b) The essentially long-term nature of nature restoration programs contrasts with the current short-term attitude common in business operations, societal expectations, and politics.
 - i. Financing: although recent financing mechanisms and restoration programs have introduced creative solutions to bridge the gap between the extended duration of restoration activities and investor expectations, by offering assurances of investment returns, there remains a significant need for broader implementation of such strategies.
 - ii. Social: the lengthy restoration process adds to the public's scepticism, as many people believe that restoration outcomes should be swift, leading to disbelief and impacting negatively in their opinion when helping nature to be preserved.
 - iii. Policy: political decisions are often driven by electoral cycles, which typically span 4-5 years—barely half the time required to begin seeing the environmental, biodiversity, and climate regulation benefits from restoration efforts. As a result, the long-term character of these projects contrasts with the short-term concentration of political goals.

2.2. Needs

In general, all-round tables could see a clear path from the identified difficulties to the needs required to solve those challenges. Among the key ones identified, we may highlight the following frequent needs:

- a) Enhancement of communication to society at the three main topics levels. More communication campaigns, more initiatives that use friendly tools when interacting with stakeholders with no experience on the ground, more platforms for stakeholders to network, and advance on early-stage education and sensibilisation were among the needs identified to strengthen communication.
- b) Understanding stakeholders drivers, needs and fears was clear affirmation identified during round table 1 but it can be of application to the other two topics.
- c) Member States must play a role to overcome the identified challenges, something that has been clearly stated in the Nature Restoration Law, which is making restoration goals an obligation from the countries themselves.

2.3. Solutions

For all the previous summarised challenges and needs across the three main topics, the following solutions have been highlighted as required for transversal implementation in the 3 main round table discussion challenges identified:

1. Partnering with educational institutions to sensibilise our young generations in ecology and environment across all educational levels.
2. Enhance the creation of novel communication campaigns and tools to promote the involvement of all key actors and stakeholders in restoration projects.
3. Develop innovative and effective business models that solve the main financing challenges: long ROI, difficulties in capitalise ecosystem services and attract private companies to nature restoration investment.
4. Promote training and specialisation courses to provide more people that can work in the field of nature restoration. In the same way, train scientist to better communicate the results of their research, to bring expertise to the people.

