



H2020 MERLIN

Strategy for the Navigation Sector

Anna Kusters
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Anna Kusters



Tom Buijse

MERLIN

Mainstreaming **E**cological **R**estoration
of freshwater-related ecosystems in a **L**andscape context:
INnovation, upscaling and transformation

*The MERLIN project (<https://project-merlin.eu>) has received funding
from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme
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The MERLIN project



- Aim: contribute to **delivering the EU Green Deal goals through freshwater restoration**
→ by mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions
- **H2020 “Green Deal” call**
- **46 partners** from academia, NGOs, water agencies, municipalities and practitioners
- **21M Euro**
(50% into restoration projects)
- Duration: **Oct 2021 - Mar 2026**

The MERLIN project

Top down

Bottom Up

18 restoration case-studies

Bottom Up



PEATLANDS
AND WETLANDS



SMALL STREAMS
AND BASINS



LARGE TRANS-
BOUNDARY
RIVERS

Top down

Mainstreaming NbS across economic sectors



Agriculture



Insurance



Peat extraction



Water supply
& sanitation



Navigation

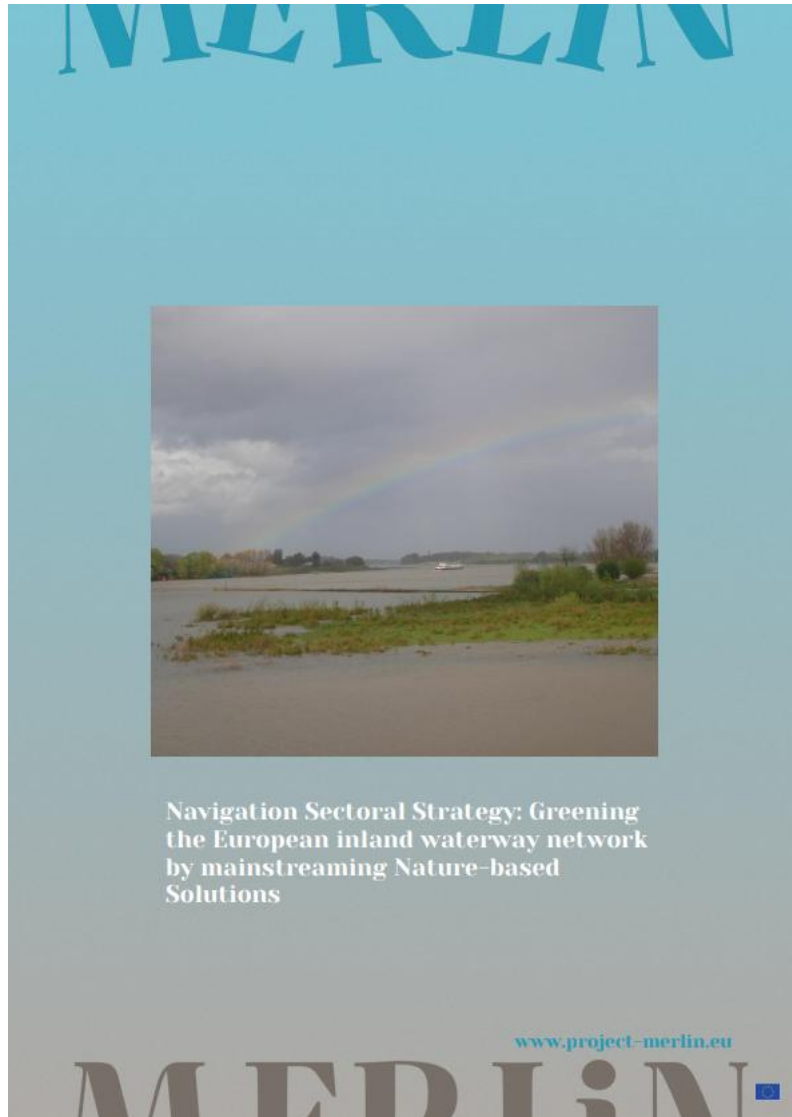


Hydropower

Online round tables

- What are NbS in the context of inland navigation?
- Who can be considered part of the ‘navigation sector’, what is their view on the challenges?
- Which initiatives are already ongoing, how can we build on them?
- What are important institutional differences between countries?
- How can multifunctional measures be financed?
- What are the knowledge gaps?

	RT1	RT2	RT3
	March 2022	April 2023	June 2024
Deltares	X	X	X
European Barge Union		X	
European Boating Association	X		
European River Cruise Association	X	X	
Federal Institute of Hydrology (Germany)			X
Inland Navigation Europe		X	X
International Sava River Basin Commission	X	X	X
James Hutton Institute	X	X	X
PIANC - The World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure	X	X	X
Recreational Navigation Commission	X		
Rijkswaterstaat	X		
University of Duisburg-Essen			X
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna			X
US Army Corps of Engineers	X		
Viadonau	X	X	X
WWF Hungary / Central Eastern Europe	X	X	X



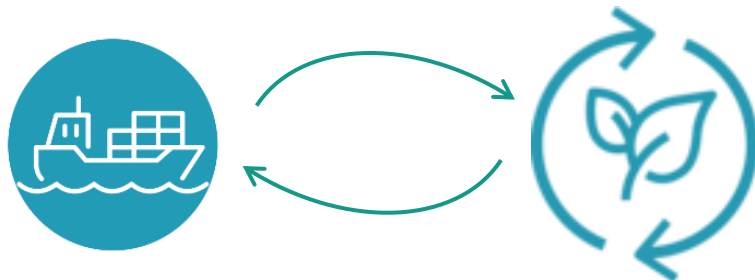
“Navigation Sectoral Strategy: Greening the European inland waterway network by mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions”

NbS in the inland waterway context



Top-down perspectives

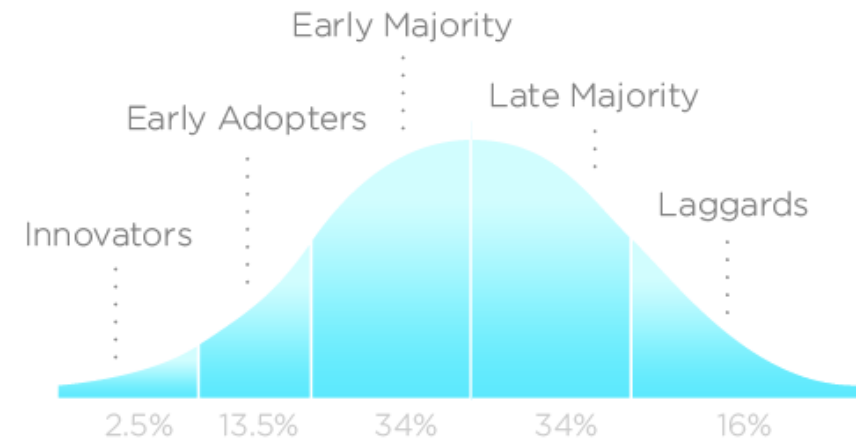
- Link between inland navigation and ecosystem functioning not sufficiently embedded in
 - policies
 - guidelines
 - implementation programmes
- **No plan on how to achieve the dual Green Deal goal:**
 - promote environmentally friendly navigation
 - improve ecological functioning and biodiversity of inland waterways



MERLIN

Bottom-up initiatives

- Experience with NbS on river basin level, but:
- **Application of NbS in inland waterways is in Early Adopters phase**
- **No platform to share knowledge & experience with a wider audience**



Source: Rogers (2003), image: Wikipedia



Strategic Actions

Action	What	Who
A	Develop an action plan for greening inland waterways	DG Move, DG Env
B	Build confidence by installing Communities of Practice	DG Move, DG Env, international river basin commissions, national and regional waterway authorities
C	Share experiences with NbS in inland waterways	Stakeholders in NbS implementation projects
D	Minimise traditional engineering of inland waterways	Waterway authorities and nature organisations
E	Prioritise inland waterways based on their ecological status and role for navigation	DG Move and DG Env with contributions from national authorities responsible for implementing TEN-T, WFD and NRR

