Welcome editorial by the REFORM Coordinator

Dear reader,

Many colleagues find it hard to believe that nearly 4 years have passed and that the REFORM project will be ready within less than 3 months from now. It can also be considered a sign that the cooperation within REFORM has been very constructive and productive: if the work is inspiring and challenging then time flies. This is our one but last newsletter. It informs you about the well appreciated international conference and summer school, REFORM's contribution to economics of river restoration, Ph.D. research and one of our flagship case studies.

Since our previous newsletter the major event has been - of course - our final conference 'Novel Approaches to Assess and Rehabilitate Modified Rivers' attended by 170 participants from 26 countries. Two items refer to this event: 'Spotlight on River Restoration' and the interviews with two renowned colleagues from the United States who both presented a keynote during the conference: Stan Gregory and Phil Roni.

The conference was preceded by a summer school "Restoring regulated streams linking theory and practice" for students and early career researchers. The young participants very much liked the programme. We had the opportunity to record all lectures allowing a wide audience to make use of REFORM's results for assessing the hydromorphological status and impacts on ecological and restoration planning and evaluation. We invite you to use it and communicate it to interested colleagues.

The REFORM project also addresses the economic aspects of river restoration. Roy Brouwer (VU, Amsterdam) introduces one of our deliverables which focuses on the costs and benefits of restoration. There is not much experience across Europe with social cost-benefit analysis in this particular area. To this end, a guidance document has been prepared.

Despite the great advancement the WFD has brought to improve the ecological status of aquatic ecosystems, many regret the disregard of riparian zones and floodplains that are so important to river ecosystem functioning. Mattie O'Hare (CEH, Edinburgh) and Annette Baattrup-Pedersen (Aarhus University) coordinated the research for better guidance on how to identify impacts of hydromorphological degradation on riparian ecosystems.

In our serial on Ph.D. research within REFORM, Sabine Scheunig (IGB, Berlin) introduces her research on the interaction between aquatic macrophytes and hydromorphology. Different vegetation management approaches will be investigated to enhance self-sustainability, increase river health and reduce maintenance costs. Anette Baisner Alnoee (Aarhus University) investigates the role of restoration for stream ecosystem functioning: little is known on how stream restoration affects functional parameters such as stream metabolism, organic matter breakdown rates or nutrient uptake rates by different stream organisms.

The serial on REFORM case studies moves to Sweden where longitudinal connectivity has been improved and the amount of available salmonid habitat have been enlarged in the River Mörrumsån. It serves as an excellent example of how stakeholders with different interests joint forces and reached an agreement between fish migration and hydropower production.

The last 3 months of our project will be dedicated to finalising several deliverables, which will be ready on time and are particularly relevant for the application of the results of REFORM. Furthermore we organise a workshop on e-flows and sediment dynamics (Rome, 8-10 September) and give input to the ECOSTAT workshop on hydromorphology (Oslo, 12-13 October). In our last newsletter we will inform on these final results and how they will be available after REFORM has finished. I do hope you enjoyed reading our newsletters and that it helps and stimulates you to further explore our results.

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On behalf of the REFORM team,

Tom Buijse, REFORM Coordinator

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