

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 is now well developed in Sweden and has 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

The most likely barrier is that not all relevant organisations in the societies are involved in the projects. Another potential barrier is that 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.
- » Overview of the legal and administrative process.

More Information

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