



TOPIC SYNTHESIS SESSION DESCRIPTION FORM

10TH WORLD WATER FORUM

Please complete this form no later than **22nd of March 2024**.

Session Code and Title (e.g. Topic Synthesis Session 3A):

Topic Synthesis Session 2B - Restoring and protecting freshwater ecosystems at all scales

Topic Coordinators (Name, Position, Organization, email, mobile number):

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Session Description (300 words):

Water is a critical resource for both for humans and nature. We depend on healthy, functioning ecosystems for our water resources and ultimately our water security, which is threatened by climate change. The degradation or destruction of freshwater ecosystems inevitably leads to acute problems affecting aquatic biodiversity but also our livelihoods and health. Therefore, a critical pathway to meeting our collective goals is to prioritize the conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity.

The ecosystems are tightly interconnected across scales: upstream pollutants affect downstream biodiversity and human uses, downstream projects impacting ecological continuity impact upstream ecosystems. It follows that the response to pressures on ecosystems must be coordinated across scales at every level of the watershed, with special attention being paid to ecological continuity and Nature-based Solutions.

This synthesis session will explore tangible experiences of how to structure conservation and restoration mechanisms to optimize the multiple values held by ecosystems by revisiting the main takeaways of the 2B thematic sessions. Emphasis will be put on the lessons learned through previous initiatives by analyzing the obstacles that hinder the implementation of long-term, nature-positive solutions across river basins. These will include lessons learned with regards to the sustainable funding of restoration and conservation project, methods to restore river life and ecological continuity, and the valuing of Nature-based Solutions as defined by the IUCN for water quality and security.

Key messages (2 maximum)

1. Improving freshwater ecosystems function and health through restoration and conservation across river basins provides many benefits to human societies while safeguarding numerous critical species of fauna and flora.

2. Restoration and conservation projects should rely on sustainable and diversified funding, take into account the whole river basin across scale, and thrive to monitor, value and share ecosystem services between all stakeholders.



Concrete outcomes (2 maximum)

1. Audience members will get a good overview of the discussions that happened in the three sessions of group 2B (T2B1, T2B2, and T2B3), while discovering new case studies which exemplify the points made.
2. Audience members will be encouraged to take action through the worthy initiatives presented in the thematic sessions of group 2B, which will be publicized again at the end of the session in a call to action.

Detailed Session plan :

ESTIMATED TIMING	ITEM DESCRIPTION / ROLE	SPEAKERS	SPEAKERS STATUS (OK OR TBC)
10 min	Introduction - Why river restoration and conservation matter to humans and nature	Irène Félix, Loire-Bretagne French Water Agency	OK
15 min	Take away 1 - How to improve the way we fund restoration and conservation projects?	Rapporteur from T2B1 : Sophie Trémolet, OECD	OK
15 min	Take away 2 - How can we act at the whole river basin level?	Rapporteurs from T2B2 : Tom D'Haeyer Antea Group Belgium and Xin He, China Institute of Water resources and Hydropower research	OK
15 min	Take away 3 - How can we better prove the efficiency and profitability of Nature-based solutions related to freshwater ecosystems and challenges?	Rapporteur from T2B3 Andréa Ferret, French Biodiversity Agency	OK
20 min	Discussion with the audience and/or the panelists (depending on room configuration)	All panelists	TBC
5 min	Conclusion	TBD	TBC
10 min	Call to action - Let's act now for humans and nature! (Flash presentation of worthy initiatives that can be joined and supported)	All panelists and moderator	OK