EcoAdvance
Advancing freshwater restoration

ECOADVANCE CONSULTATION DATA

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Summary

An online survey was undertaken as part of the EcoAdvance Project consultation programme. This report provides details of the survey data collected and how this may be accessed. Analysis of the survey data is reported separately in EcoAdvance Report WP3-Dl-65.

1 Introduction

The EcoAdvance Project aims to identify and showcase success in the restoration of freshwater ecosystems across Europe. The project team undertook a wide review of practice, identifying and consulting with people and projects to better understand how success was perceived and achieved by different stakeholders.

Focus of this Report

Following the initial review work, two programmes of online consultation were undertaken, comprising an initial survey, followed by a revised approach. Analysis of the data collected from these surveys formed the basis for development of the EcoAdvance Prone to Success (P2S) checklist.

This report details what data was collected and how this may be accessed.

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Initial survey

The initial survey was implemented together with the registration. Registration was available within the first few months of the project in early 2023 and participation encouraged by engaging people on social media platforms and contacting stakeholders in each country as part of the country by country analysis of river basin management plans whilst promoting the project work and its website. The initial survey was developed later in 2023.

The format and content of the initial survey pages can be found in the Appendices of EcoAdvance Report WP2-Dl-62, as follows:

(1) Simple Survey - see Appendix A in report WP2-Dl-62

(2) Initial Survey – Personal Experience - see Appendix B in report WP2-Dl-62

(3) Initial Survey – Project Experience - see Appendix C in report WP2-Dl-62

(4) Interview & Showcase Materials - see Appendix D in report WP2-Dl-62

2.2 Follow up survey

The overall aim of the follow-up survey was to consult key stakeholders and representatives of restoration projects, engaging them in analysing the reasons behind their success, identifying (common sets of) drivers of success, as well as relevant combinations of different drivers of success in different socio-cultural settings.

A revised survey approach was used to encourage a greater response to the survey. Instead of using a bespoke survey system the survey was created within Google Docs. The data collected comprised similar structured responses (to the initial survey) which could also be exported to an excel sheet (Table 2). Whilst the objectives and focus for questions were similar, the style was revised to make it as easy as possible to respond to. Critically, the second survey approach:

- Used Google Docs survey rather than a bespoke system
- Did not require the consultee to provide any contact information (unless they offered)
- Was made available in nine languages (Czech, German, Spanish, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Romanian and Serbian).

For the translations of the survey text and the responses we utilized DeepL and ChatGPT.

2.3 Analysis of survey responses

Survey conclusions on factors influencing restoration success were mainly derived from structured questions (Likert-scale and multiple-choice) in Topics 1–4. These reflect predefined themes, therefore open-ended questions in Topic 5 were included to capture additional insights, barriers, and recommendations beyond the fixed framework. Qualitative responses were analysed separately and, where relevant (e.g. sections 5.6, 6.4, 6.5, 7.4), they complemented the quantitative findings by adding context-specific knowledge from respondents' experience.

Qualitative results were synthesised alongside quantitative conclusions when they revealed gaps or required further consideration. This input refined the understanding of success factors and ensured that no major topics were omitted. Binary and three-option questions were evaluated using positive/negative ratios; five-point Likert items were summarised with descriptive statistics. Free-text responses were examined using automated text-analysis (ChatGPT-4.0): key terms were extracted and counted to indicate their relative prominence. For free-text categorisation, ChatGPT grouped similar responses, after which the categories were manually reviewed and adjusted when necessary. ChatGPT then quantified category frequencies and proposed example sentences, all of which were manually verified for accuracy.

The survey itself and the results of the analyses is available in report WP3-DI-65.

3 Survey Formats

The initial survey was undertaken via an online questionnaire coded directly into the EcoAdvance website. The data collected comprised structured responses stored in an excel sheet type database (Table 1).

The revised approach used a survey created within Google Docs. The data collected comprised similar structured responses stored in an excel sheet type database (Table 2).

Both dataset included key variables such as respondent identifiers, geographic information and timestamped responses. Data validation procedures were applied to ensure consistency, and the dataset was anonymized before analysis.

Table 1. The form of response database related to the initial survey

Cell name	Type of data	Description
Title	Text	Respondents could give their data
First Name	Text	Respondents could give their data
Surname	Text	Respondents could give their data
Email Address	Text	Respondents could give their data
Position	Text	Respondents could give their data
Organisation	Text	Respondents could give their data
Address	Text	Respondents could give their data
Country	Text	Respondents could give their data
Phone Number	numbers	Respondents could give their data
Mobile Number	numbers	Respondents could give their data
Group Membership	Text	Respondents could give their data
Bio	Text	Respondents could give their data
Website	Text	Respondents could give their data
Twitter	Text	Respondents could give their data
Google+	Text	Respondents could give their data
Facebook	Text	Respondents could give their data
Linkedin	Text	Respondents could give their data
WhatsApp	Text	Respondents could give their data
Skype	Text	Respondents could give their data
Have you been directly involved in a freshwater ecosystem restoration project?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice
What was this due to?	Text	Free text responses
In your experience (covering all projects undertaken), what are the top 3 factors that contribute most to a successful restoration project?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice
In your experience (covering all projects undertaken), what are the top 3 barriers to a successful restoration project?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice
Are you aware of / do you use, any ecosystem performance assessment frameworks?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice
In your experience, when and how do you consider that a project has been successful?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice

We will be showcasing best practice examples of freshwater ecosystem restoration projects. Do you have examples of projects that you would like to share with others?	Text	Respondents choose from multiple choice
Project Examples	Text	Respondents could suggest freshwater restoration projects to us suitable for showcasing

Table 2. The form of the response database related to the follow up survey.

Cell name	Type of data	Description
Timestamp	date	Date of survey completion (year/month/day and hour:minute:second). It is used as an ID
Where do you live?	text	Respondents indicated their home country
Which category fits you best?	text	Indicate the type of respondent (4 options)
1.1 Restoration projects that are reactions to a crisis are more likely to be prone to success	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.2 Community participation from the very beginning is key to project success	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.3 Pro-active community education about the need for restoration can make a big difference in restoration success	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.4 A transparent local planning process makes restoration projects prone to success	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.5 Engaging stakeholders and understanding stakeholder conflicts can help resolve conflicts and make restoration more prone to success	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.6 Please check which modes are most effective for successful stakeholder involvement:	number	respondents evaluate their agreement with the statement in a 5 level Likert rating system
1.6. FREE TEXT	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 1.6
2.1 The availability of historic data makes a difference to freshwater ecosystem restoration chances for success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
2.2 Solid scientific evidence that something has worked elsewhere is critical to freshwater ecosystem restoration success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
2.3 Models that predict results of freshwater restoration strategies (or examples of good practices) that demonstrate likely impacts and changes from freshwater restoration strategies make projects prone to success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice

2.4 What is the general practice of monitoring that you already use? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 2.4
2.5 Can you name a guideline which you use in your work? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 2.5
3.1 Setting measurable goals in terms of ecosystem condition and improvements makes projects prone to success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
3.2 Using a reference condition makes a project more prone to success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
free text	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 3.2
3.3 Setting goals in terms of specific ecosystem services make projects more prone to success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 3.3
3.4 Projects that prioritize between ecosystem functionality/ecological status and ecosystem services are more prone to success (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 3.4
3.5 Projects with restoration activities conducted over extended timeframes and across broad spatial scales are more likely to effectively enhance ecosystem services and ecological health compared to those with shorter-term, localized efforts	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
3.6 Is ecosystem service assessment part of your restoration work?	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
If yes, What ES do you assess? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 3.6
4.1 The Water Framework Directive helps make projects prone to success by:	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
4.2 The EU Biodiversity 2030 Strategy helps make projects prone to success by:	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
4.3 The Restoration Law would make our restoration actions easier through a legal framework	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
Please explain (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 4.3
4.4 Common Agricultural Policy would make restoration projects prone to success by:	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
4.5 My country's national policies help make freshwater restoration projects prone to success	Categorical	Respondents choose from multiple choice
Please explain (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the question 4.5
Please tell us what kind of bureaucratic and legal obstacles make it difficult to initiate and implement a restoration project (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question
What changes or additions would you recommend to the European Commission to	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question

make freshwater ecosystem restoration more successful? (FREE TEXT)		
What changes or additions would you recommend to your national or local government to make freshwater ecosystem restoration more successful? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question
In your opinion, what main factors make a freshwater restoration project more prone to success? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question
In your opinion, what main factors are barriers to achieving a successful restoration project? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question
Do you have any other comments or suggestions for the EcoAdvance team in our efforts to understand factors and drivers that make restoration projects more prone to success? (FREE TEXT)	text	Contains the free text responses to the specific in summary question
Please list any relevant projects funded from European or other resources you are or have been involved in: (FREE TEXT)	text	Here respondents could suggest restoration projects suitable for Showcase Reports
Name	text	Respondents could give their names (optional)
Email	text	Respondents could give their email address (optional)

4 Survey Responses and Access to Data

The initial survey resulted in 82 responses as of end June 2024.

The revised approach resulted in a further 162 responses as of end January 2025.

The anonymised consultation survey results dataset is available as open access on Zenodo with the citation including DOI of:

EcoAdvance Project. (2025). EcoAdvance: Consultation Survey Results Dataset [Data set]. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17768112

Note that additional reports addressing data analysis and the subsequent development of the P2S Checklist are also available from Zenodo via:

EcoAdvance Project. (2025). Analysis of Review Responses and Identification of Factors Driving Success in Different Countries and Settings. Report WP3-Dl-65. Deliverable D3.2. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18001936

EcoAdvance Project. (2025). Prone 2 Success Checklist. Report WP3-Dl-64. Deliverable D3.3. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18002009

5 Database Structure

The consultation data is stored in a structured database comprising multiple tables (Excel sheets). The key components include:

- Raw response data in multiple languages, capturing original stakeholder inputs.
- Translated response data in English, processed using DeepL.
- In follow up survey database it contains the statistical tables, providing descriptive statistics such as the number of responses categorized by respondent type and country, along with percentage distributions for each question.

The database is maintained in MS Excel format, ensuring accessibility and compatibility for further analysis. Both the raw and translated datasets follow the same structure.

6 Data Storage and Security

Sets of the survey data are stored securely in project archive space by the HUN-REN Centre for Ecological Research and SamuiFrance sarl for whom the responsible data managers are Dr Lukács Balázs András and Dr Mark Morris respectively.

In addition:

- **Storage Type**: The anonymise database is available as open access on Zenodo (https://zenodo.org) within the EcoAdvance Community (https://zenodo.org/communities/ecoadvance)
- **Access Control**: Role-based access management restricts data editing and viewing rights.
- **Encryption**: Personal and sensitive data are encrypted to ensure compliance with GDPR and ethical data handling guidelines.
- **Citation**: EcoAdvance Project (2025). EcoAdvance: Consultation Survey Results Dataset [Data set]. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17768112

7 References

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EcoAdvance Project. (2025). Prone 2 Success Checklist. Report WP3-Dl-64. Deliverable D3.3. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18002009