



## Working with nature: Observing the benefits and inclusivity of MERLIN freshwater restoration

The goal of the MERLIN project (<https://project-merlin.eu/>) is to promote nature-based solutions as a primary method for addressing present-day societal issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and other challenges tackled by the EU Green Deal. One of MERLIN's tasks is to investigate the benefits of freshwater restoration measures in 17 different case studies, which will be used to establish a foundation for replicating nature-based solutions throughout Europe.



This questionnaire aims to gather the information on:

1. Case Study Board members' perceptions and experiences of restoration measures in their local areas
2. Current state, opportunities, and barriers for implementation
3. Stakeholder awareness of nature-based solutions (NbS)
4. Progress towards implementing the global NbS standards

### Glossary of terms

For the purpose of this survey, we define the different terms as following:

**Restoration:** measures to restore or renew the environment. In MERLIN, the range of restoration measure include rewetting, floodplain reconnection, dam removal and channel restoration and riparian (riverbank) restoration.

**Nature-based Solutions (NbS):** actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. Societal challenges include issues related to climate change, disaster risks, human health, food security, water security and environmental degradation. MERLIN aims to ensure that the restoration measures undertaken are NbS and meet the Global standard for NbS.

**Transformation:** how society (including policy, business and the public) might need to significantly change to allow these NbS to become mainstream.

**Mainstreaming of restoration:** taking actions to make restoration an integral part of freshwater management practices.



**Freshwater management practices:** all actions taken to regulate and control the movement, availability, use and quality of freshwater resources.

**MERLIN case studies:** the projects that implement the innovative restoration measures within the MERLIN collaborative project. All respondents are expected to be associated with one of the MERLIN case studies across Europe. [MERLIN case study portal](#) provides a brief description of each case study. Please, contact [Alhassan Ibrahim](#) to discuss any concerns you may have.

End of Block: Introduction

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## Start of Block: Data confidentiality

### Data Confidentiality

This survey is being run by James Hutton Institute (Hutton) and Emschergerossenschaft & Lippeverband (EGLV). Your data will be treated with full confidentiality. We will not collect direct identifiers (e.g. names, email addresses) during this research. Your case study leads will forward this questionnaire to you using the information you already provided Case Study Board meetings. It will not be possible to link your personal details with the answers you provide in the survey. It is highly unlikely that it will be possible to identify you within any research publications and outputs resulting from this research study.

### What will happen to the data I provide?

We use the Qualtrics platform to carry out this survey. Qualtrics acts as our data processor for any personal data collected from you via the survey. We have in place appropriate contracts with our third-party suppliers including Qualtrics to ensure that your personal data is being protected adequately. Your personal data may be transferred by Qualtrics outside of the European Economic Area and the United Kingdom (UK). More information about how Qualtrics processes personal data is available in their privacy statement, <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

Survey data will be downloaded from Qualtrics and stored on secure servers of the James Hutton Institute in the UK. The data collected for this research will be anonymous and retained for the duration of the project (2021-2025). The anonymized data will be shared with EGLV for further analysis. The data will only be used for MERLIN and associated academic publications. The anonymised results will be made public in the form of reports.

### Do I have to take part in the survey?

No, participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any point without giving reasons and without your legal rights being affected. If you wish to withdraw before you complete the survey, kindly close your browser. Withdrawal after the survey has been completed may not be possible, as your identifiable data will not be collected, so we won't be able to link your name to the data you wish to withdraw. If you wish to discuss any specific concern after submitting the survey, please email [Alhassan.ibrahim@hutton.ac.uk](mailto:Alhassan.ibrahim@hutton.ac.uk).

### What are the benefits of taking part in the survey?

The questionnaire will help the Case Study Boards understand different perspectives on how



restoration measures is implemented their respective catchment/region. It is clear that having local knowledge and stakeholder engagement is essential to supporting NbS that helps a wide range of beneficiaries. Hence, this is your chance to help us track progress of the restoration measures in your area and understand the extent to which stakeholders are being involved. MERLIN will help address the barriers that you identify in this questionnaire to ensure that the outcome address the societal and environmental needs of your local community. We will repeat the questionnaire later in MERLIN to monitor the progress of the restoration measures.

### **What are the possible risks from taking part in the survey?**

This research is approved as a low-risk human research and no major risk is expected.

### **Will I be reimbursed for taking part?**

There is no reimbursement for taking part. Your case study leads will share the results with you as a member of the case study board. This will provide you with further insight about how to shape the implementation of the nature-based measures in your case study.

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**How should I fill in the questionnaire?** Your response to the questionnaire represents your personal view and not that of the organization where you work. Please respond to the questions from the perspective of the [MERLIN case study](#) you are involved in. Please answer in English if possible. If you cannot use English, use Google to translate the questions and provide the responses in the language that you are comfortable with. For your responses, add additional information as you wish, and feel free to skip questions or use 'I do not know'. We estimate it would take you approximately 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire but if you cannot fully complete it at one time, you should be able to return to your unfinished questionnaire by using the same browser and device.

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This research has been favourably reviewed by the James Hutton Institute Research Ethics Committee which considers that it presents no ethical risks to participants from taking part. All participants are also encouraged to read the privacy statement below, and the electronic consent section before completing the questionnaire.

### **Privacy statement**

The James Hutton Institute and EGLV ('EGLV'; 'Hutton', 'we', 'us') are committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we collect about you and how we use it. Hutton is acting as data controllers of any personal information collected via this survey. EGLV will be an independent data controller of the anonymized data via MERLIN's secured data storage platform. Please note that your personal information (if collected) will be treated with confidentiality by the research team, and we will ensure that you are not identifiable in any publications and outputs resulting from this survey. Your email address (if provided) will be stored separately from the survey responses in secure Hutton servers in the UK and will not be shared beyond the Hutton research team. For further information about how we process personal data please see our full privacy notices, <https://www.hutton.ac.uk/terms>. If you have



any queries about your personal data or you wish to exercise your rights under the EU GDPR and UK GDPR, you can contact Hutton's Data Protection Officer on [dpo@hutton.ac.uk](mailto:dpo@hutton.ac.uk).