

MID-TERM EVALUATION CONSENSUS REPORT

Evidence based assessment of NWRM for sustainable water management (EviBAN)

Name of Coordinator: Dr. Herman Hellness

Project code: WaterWorks2017-Eviban

Duration of project: 36 months

Start date: 01/04/2019

End date: 31/03/2022

FOLLOW-UP GROUP

Please include the data of the FG members reviewing the report

Name	Organisation
Jessica Budds	University of East Anglia
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1. Scientific and technological progress (Maximum 250 words)

As work package 1 comprises project coordination, most of the work during this period has been on work package 2, relating to toolbox development. However, it is not always very clear from the report what work has been done, and to what extent this has matched the original proposal, during this first half. The report has a tendency to reiterate the aims of different aspects of the work, and describe the work done very vaguely, producing a lack of clarity over exactly what has been achieved and its significance, even if it is stated that all deliverables and milestones have been attained. For example, the governance assessment tool text just states that data for the case studies have been mapped, and an initial version of the tool developed, giving little indication of the methods and data involved, or the nature and purchase of the tool. The report makes several statements that aspects of the work are “in progress”, without providing any explanatory detail. Conversely, the case studies report actual data, without really explaining the significance of those data to the project or beyond.

Our sense from the report is that the different tools and case studies are still quite disconnected and fragmented so far, and that a priority for the second half will be integration.

Stakeholder engagement and communication is very vague, with statements about “local stakeholders” being interested in and/or supportive of the project, with no illustration or explanation.

Outputs so far (1 chapter, 1 poster) are modest.

2. Collaboration, coordination and mobility within the Consortium (Maximum 250 words)

As expected, coordination and mobility have been affected to some extent by the Covid-19 situation, with activities moving online from March 2020. The report validly notes that this has led to instances whereby the depth of discussions could not be achieved in the envisaged

timeframe, and that a number of events over a longer period is needed to replace a single planned face-to-face event.

The project held a face-to-face kick-off workshop in May 2019, before the pandemic, and a second annual meeting online in May 2020. The number of consortium-wide meetings is perhaps rather modest, and could be enhanced in the second half. There have been other meetings, around case studies and management issues.

Mobility in particular has been limited, with one PhD student having to cut short a visit to a partner institution in March 2020, and some stakeholder engagement meetings moving to online format. However, while the team has run events via MS Teams etc, it does not seem to have given as much thought to how to maintain contact under the new conditions as it perhaps could have done. In particular, there does not seem to be as much communication across case study sites as we would have expected to see from this project, and especially in light of the pandemic. Given that the situation may continue to persist for some time, we would also have expected a stronger sense of mitigation measures from this report.

3. Coordination with other international project funded by WaterWorks2017, or other instruments (Maximum 250 words)

As we read it, the report does not mention any contact with other funded projects on this programme, which is perhaps surprising given that there are others also examining nature-based solutions. Reference is made to other projects that are being carried out by members of the team with other sources of funding, which is acceptable, although it seems that in one place in the report (p. 17) it is suggested that a project proposal under review would be crucial to complete aspects of collaboration and dissemination of this project.

Interconnections between Eviban and other projects could also be fostered by joint events promoted by Water JPI.

4. Coverage of the themes and sub-themes of the call (Maximum 250 words)

At this stage of the project it continues to be well aligned with the themes of the JPI programme as per the original proposal. However, as noted above, the impression we get from the report is that the development of the tools and the case studies is being conducted in a rather isolated and disconnected way across institutions and case study themes and locations. This may be because the case studies are quite different, and/or because the case studies also relate to PhD projects in some or all cases. This implies that integration, and the pursuit of findings across the project as a whole, will be a priority for the second half of the grant and for future evaluation.

5. Stakeholder/industry engagement (Maximum 250 words)

From the report, it seems that stakeholders have been consulted in all four case study countries, and that they have contributed to the project, presumably at least by way of interviews to inform the governance tool. However, without exception, these stakeholders are not identified in any of the cases, and the report only refers to vague and reported expressions of interest and support, without any detail or illustration to support these assertions. It is therefore very difficult to evaluate whether the stakeholders consulted are sufficiently broad and representative enough in terms of type, sector and scale, and, therefore, to what extent communication and impact are

likely to be effective.

In the second half of the project, the team could perhaps seek to engage with higher-level stakeholder and governance institutions.

6. Recommendations for improvements/amendments of the report (Please complete Table below)

Page	Modification	Rationale for change
4	Provide more detail on how the governance tool was informed and constructed, and how it will work in practice.	Too vague.
4	Provide more precise information on the state of development of the optimisation tool.	Too vague.
5	Provide a clearer state of development of the stormwater tool.	Too vague.
5/6	Clarify whether there have been any changes to the development of the MAR tool, and the MAR-SAT tool, and at what stage of development the creation of the map layers is.	Not precise enough.
7	Provide a clearer state of development of the ISA tool, explaining how it is envisaged that the different inputs will be defined and integrated, given that the input from stakeholders is not yet collected.	Too vague.
8	In the section regarding linkages to the SDGs, provide more detail on the assessments being undertaken, and how these have been informed by the development of the different tools and the data coming from the case studies.	Not precise enough.
12	Provide a brief analysis of the data in the French case and their significance, and also more detail on the information collection workshop and the field visit for monitoring.	Not precise enough.
13	As above, provide more details on the stakeholders and the data collection workshop.	Not precise enough.
14	Provide a clearer update on data collection in the Norwegian case.	Information missing.
16	Climate change data are mentioned in the Finnish case, but not in the other cases; clarify what these data are, and whether they are only relevant to this case study.	Not precise enough.
17	Specify how the partners' contributions have been identifiable in the case studies.	Not precise enough.
17	Clarify whether the new funding proposal is essential to undertake the collaboration and communication mentioned.	Too vague.
23	How will the team mitigate the potential ongoing effects of the Covid-19 situation on data integration across case studies?	Information missing.

7. General Assessment Comments (Maximum 250 words)

The project seems to have made adequate progress on work package 2, although much of this

report is too vague to properly judge. We had expected to see a clearer description of the specific activities undertaken as well as the emerging findings, as well as stronger indications of stakeholder engagement and the integration of the work across the difference case study sites.

From reading the report it is not clear, whether the consortium has a sufficient understanding of an integrated project outcome, i.e. how the outcomes of the case studies and the different technologies, may be combined and how different partners and stakeholders in the project may benefit from each other. There is a major risk of the project that partners and stakeholders may not capitalize fully on its results and outcomes.

Aspects of the project, in particular team and stakeholder meetings and planned mobility, have been disrupted by the Covid-19 situation, and we would imagine also that a number of team members have had to cope with challenging working conditions during this time, all of which is legitimate. While these conditions are clearly outside the control of the researchers, the report could have contained a clearer idea and plan of how the impacts will be mitigated as the project continues into its second half, especially as the coming months continue to be uncertain in regard to the pandemic.