

F O R U M  
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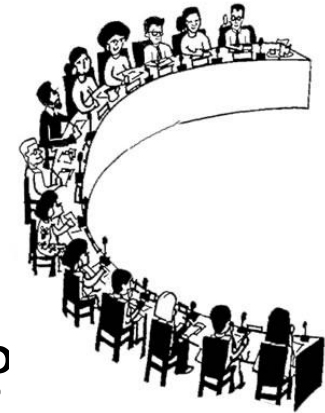
# German participatory forum on fish protection and downstream migration

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# Key question



- Can a **national stakeholder dialogue process** improve the conditions for the **implementation of measures on fish protection and downstream migration?**



# Content of presentation



1. Motivation for founding a Forum on fish protection and downstream migration
2. Objectives of Forum
3. Operational mode
4. Key messages and lessons learned

# Context & Motivation



- **Continuity disrupted** every 2 km in Germany (7,700 HP; 200,000 transverse structures)
- **Policy requirements** put pressure on stakeholders to act
  - WFD requires ecological good status at the latest by 2027
  - German Water Management Act (§35): HP authorised, if appropriate measures to protect fish populations are taken
- **Fish protection & downstream migration: Intensive & controversial issue**
  - Low acceptance of measures (only 10% of WFD continuity measures completed by 2012)
  - Conflicts of interest (economic interests, different values)
  - Technical, political & interest-motivated arguments mixed

# Purpose & objectives of Forum



- Forum on Fish Protection and Downstream Migration founded in 2012, <http://forum-fischschutz.de/>
  - Exchange information and experiences across groups with different interests throughout Germany
  - Promote acceptance and implementation of measures
  - Distinguish between political, interest-based problems and facts on technical issues and research needs

Where are there **differences of opinion**?

Which are the key **research needs**?

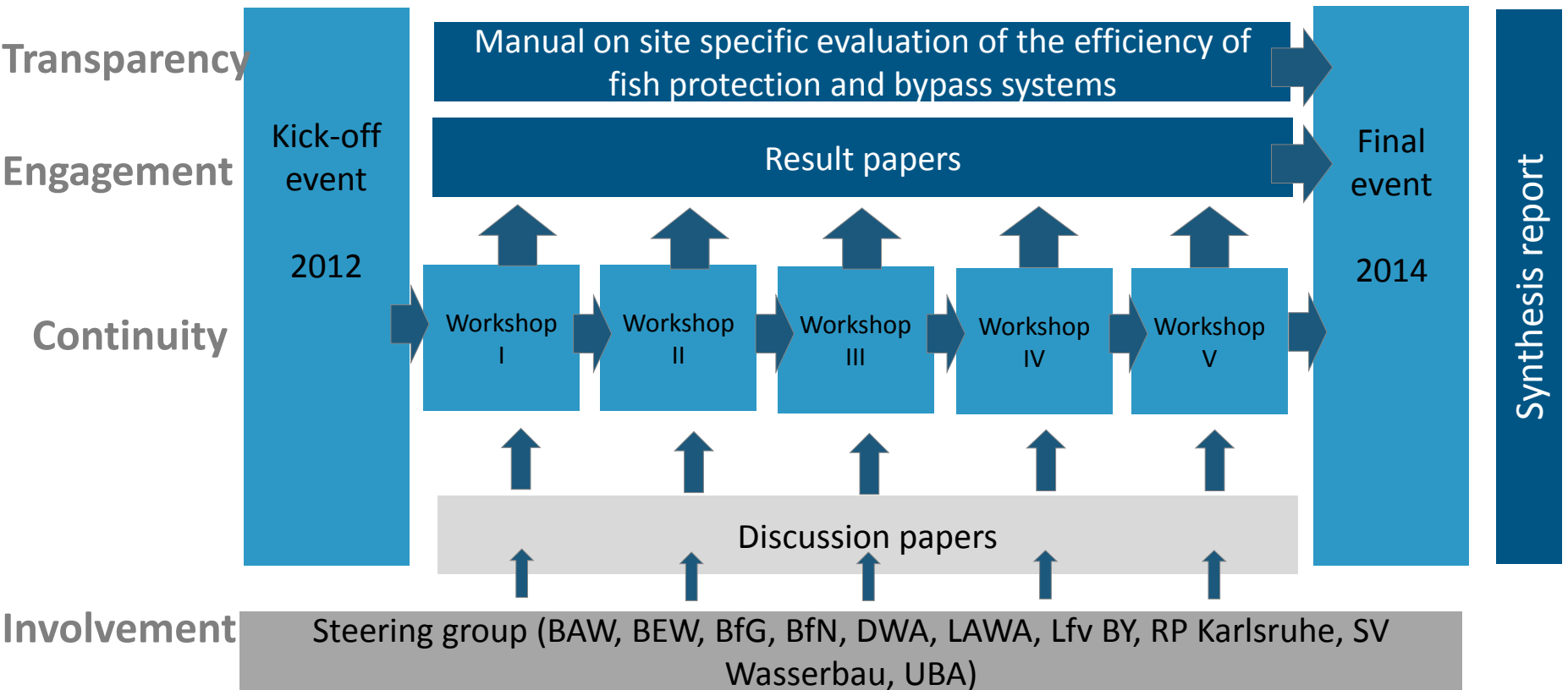
Which are the key **needs for action**?

Can there be agreement on state-of-art **methods/technologies**?





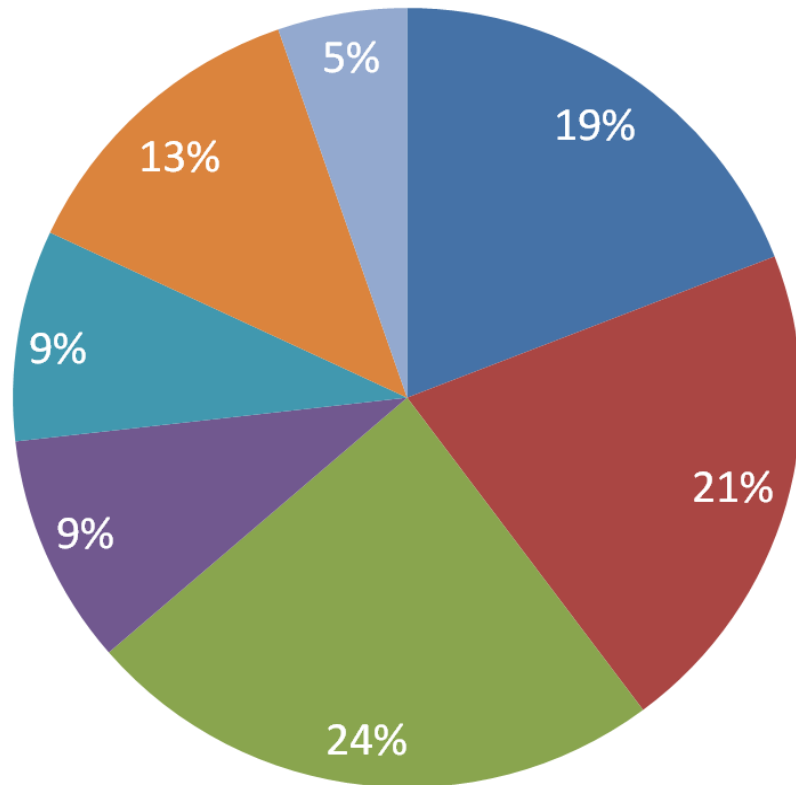
# Forum structure





## Participants

- Ca. 200 active participants, and in total ca. 500 followers across sectors



- River basin and fisheries authorities of the federal states
- National river basin, nature conservation and waterway administration
- Energy sector
- Civil engineering consultancies
- Environmental consultancies
- Nature and angler associations
- Research institutes/ universities

# Core topics defined by the Forum



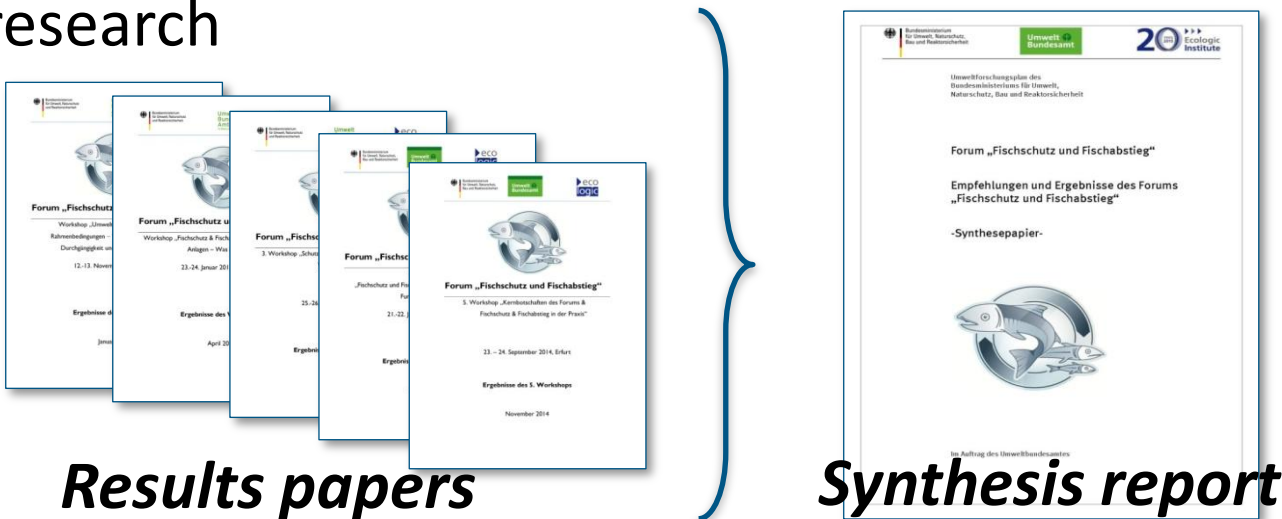
- Online poll at start of Forum to define topics for discussion at workshops
- Favoured wide range of topics:
  - Environmental **policy & legal** background
  - **Goals** for fish protection and downstream migration
  - **Behavioral & population biology** basic principles for fish protection and downstream migration
  - **Strategic planning instruments** for hydropower use and river basin management
  - Potential for **fish damage**
  - **Technical measures** for fish protection and downstream migration
  - **Functional control of measures and monitoring** for fish protection & downstream migration





# Output of the Forum

- Record of consensual points and different positions
- Common nationwide understanding on key challenges and possible solutions, main needs for action and research



- Engagement of experts in developing a **manual for site specific evaluation of efficiency** of fish protection and bypass systems

# Some key messages



**Agreement on current state of the art;** extensive knowledge and technical solutions are already available; manual on site-specific evaluation of efficiency



**Existing standards** for fish protection **should be implemented** even without absolute certainty on efficiency of measures (taking proportionality into account)



**Lay down clear rules** on how to proceed if measures do not reach objectives, despite state-of-art  
Provide funding, private investments, publicly available results



**Lack of knowledge** on technical implementation (large water bodies), behavioural & population biology



**Conflictual issues**, e.g. protection of individuum vs population, protection of fish vs. habitat



# Lessons learned on the process



## Participation principles\*

- **Openness**
- **Transparency** and regular feedback
- **Protection of core values** & balancing interests of various stakeholders
- Include **all key stakeholders from start**
- **Clarity on purpose of participation** (roadmap, outcome of process)

*\*source: EU project HarmoniCOP*

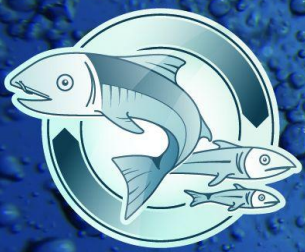
## Forum approach

- Open and unbiased discussion; neutral moderation; topics set by Forum
- Events well prepared; no urge to form consensus, all views heard
- Workshop results sent for approval of content; respect for different positions
- High interest in Forum events; able to reach the key actors
- No pressure for binding output, e.g. technical guideline; focus on common understanding & exchange (learning process)

# Conclusions and the way forward



- **Forum recommendable as instrument for participation** and improving acceptance for measures on fish protection and downstream migration on national level
- Forum participants highlighted:
  - **Improvements to the discussion culture**
  - Impact expected on **advancing the implementation of measures**
  - **Need to continue this dialogue** process
- **2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of Forum** just initiated: **2016 - 2018**
  - Continuation of Forum events
  - More in-depth discussion of technical issues
  - Set-up of an information platform



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Thank you for your attention!  
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