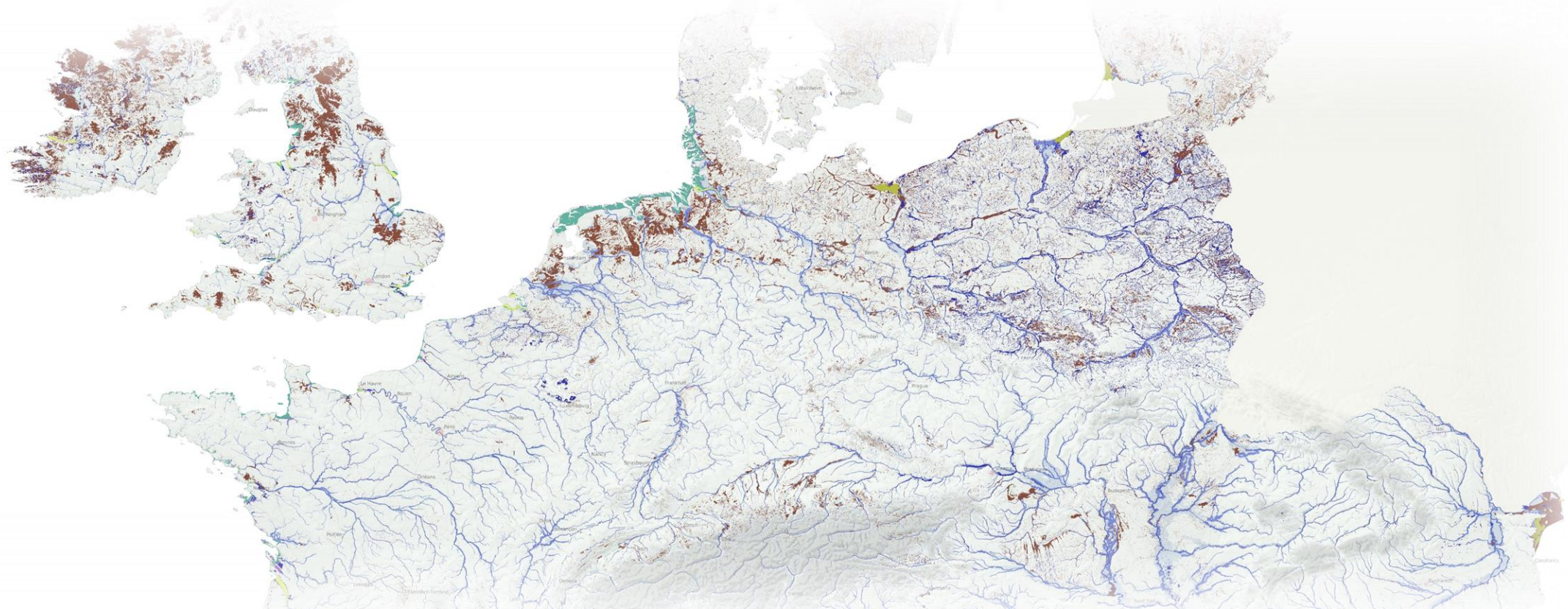


Unlocking the Power of Wetland Mapping for restoration

Online Training for policy-makers & practitioners

Peatland Restoration & Policy Integration in Europe: Regulatory context, Geo-Data needs & recommendations

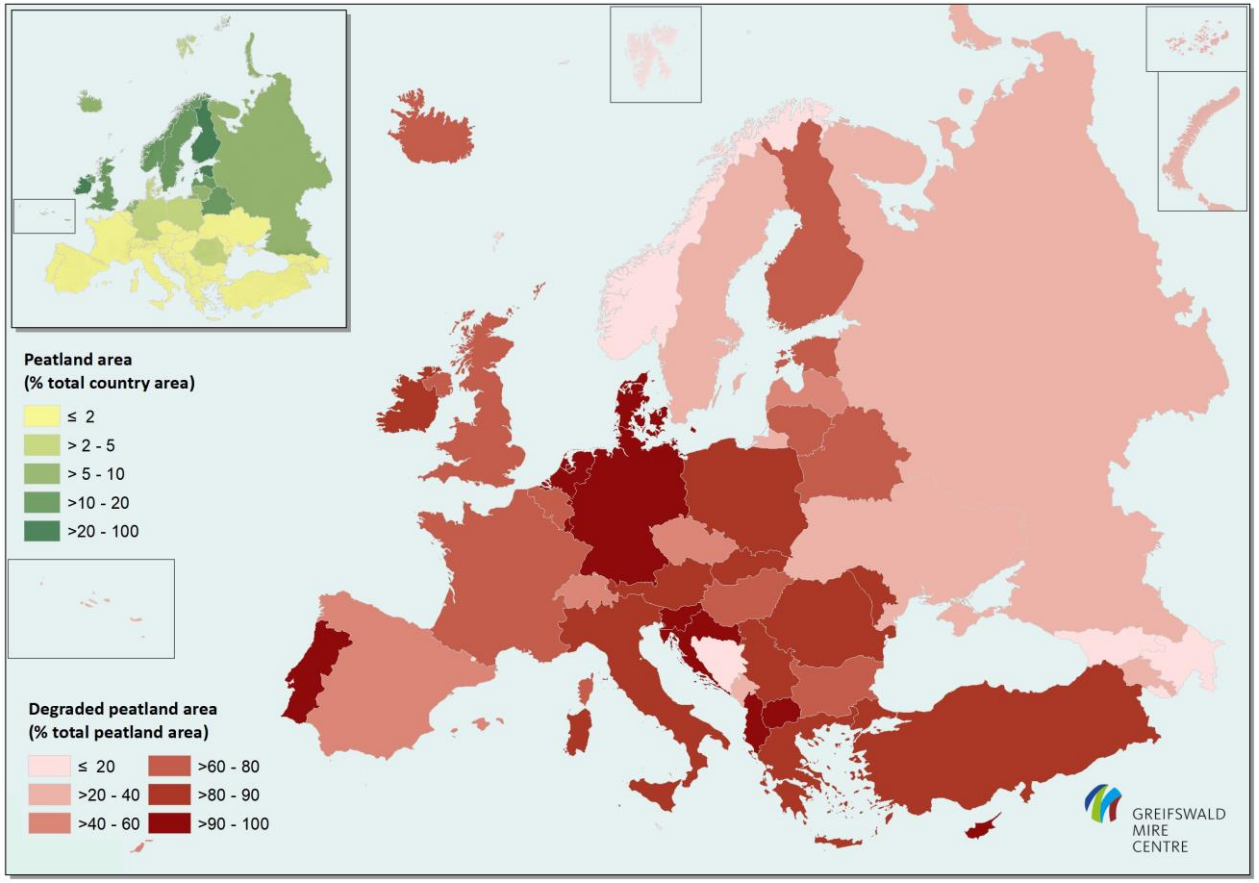
Marie Lorenz, Michael Succow Foundation

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Succow Stiftung

Partner in the GREIFSWALD MIRE CENTRE

State of peatlands in Europe



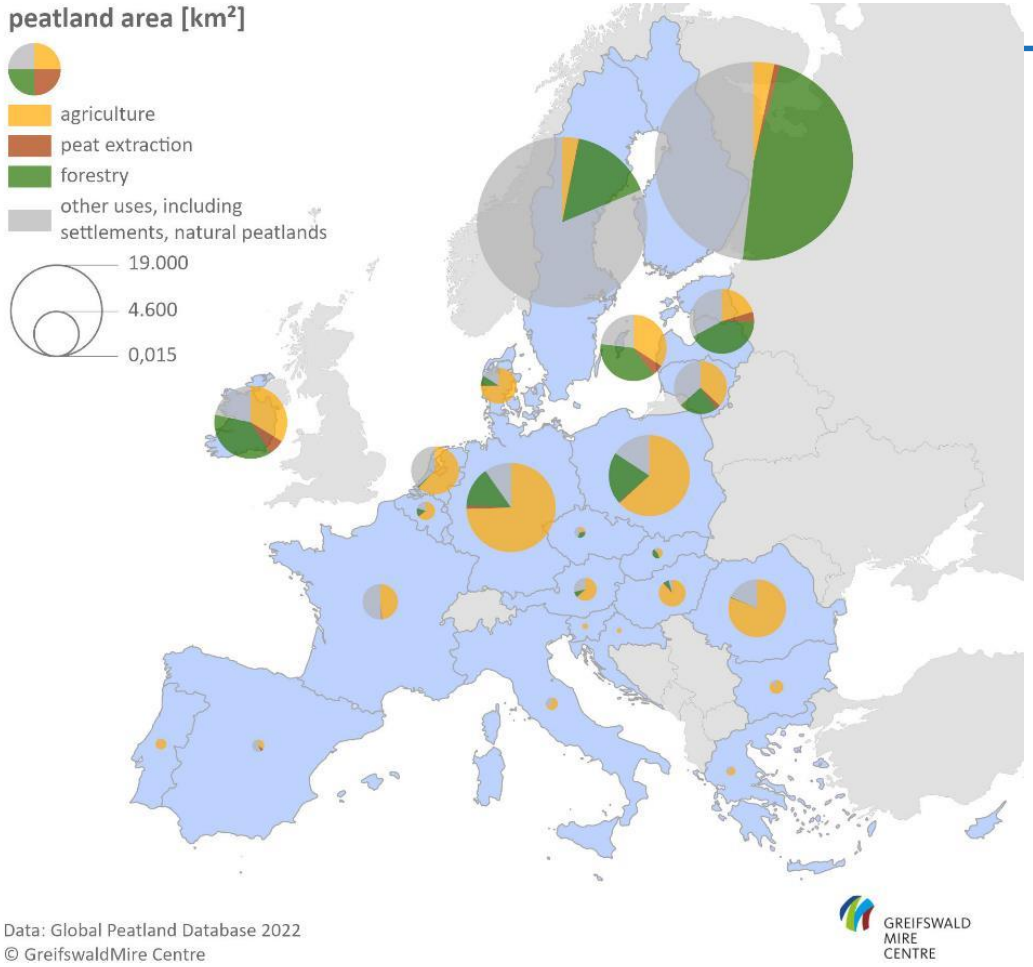
- 350,000 km² peatland area within EU member states
- more than 50% degraded by drainage

Map of current peatland area in Europe (upper left corner) and percentage of degraded peatlands from that total area (main map) (compilation based on Tanneberger et al. (2021) and Joosten et al. 2017)

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Peatland use in EU member states



Map of peatland use in Europe, showing proportions of different land use categories per country (GMC compilation)

- Peatland area largely used for agriculture & forestry
- EU is 2nd largest global emitter of GHG from drained peatlands

→ 230 Mt CO_2eq./year

→ ~7% of total EU-27 GHG emissions

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Regulatory Context

Peatlands play an important role for reaching the targets of several EU sectoral policies, most notable are:

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- EU Land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) Regulation
- Water Framework Directive (WFD)
- Habitats and Birds Directives
- Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR)
- and a potential upcoming Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Certification (CRCF)

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EU-LULUCF Regulation

→ creates the EU legislative framework for emissions and removals from the land use sector for the period 2021-2030 and establishes for the first time binding targets for all Member States for this sector.

- **Key Component**: Organic soils/peatlands, alongside forests, are crucial elements in LULUCF sector.
- **Emission Calculation**: Greenhouse gas emissions from organic soils/peatlands are determined using *activity data*.
- **Data Sources**: *Activity data* primarily includes information on various land-use categories related to organic soils and peatlands.
- **Current Gaps**: Existing data on land use in organic soils/peatlands is still incomplete, posing challenges for accurate emissions tracking.

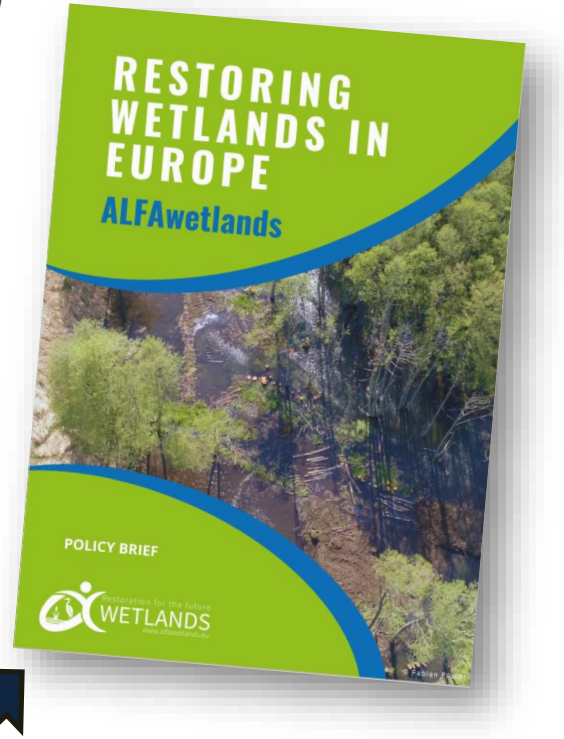
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Nature Restoration Regulation

- Key component of **European Green Deal** & instrument for **EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy**
- First European nature conservation law in more than 20 years (since Habitats and Bird Directive)
- New **binding restoration targets** in order to meet international commitments, e.g.:
  - restore habitats & species protected by the EU nature legislation
  - restore drained peatlands
- recognised as a potential 'game changer', particularly for peatlands in agricultural use – a tool to trigger large-scale transformation (and restoration)
- Requires Member States to develop **National Restoration Plans,** detailing how to achieve the regulation's targets and obligations – draft plans need to be submitted September 2026.
  - **High demand for accurate Geo-data!**



For further reading:
Have a look into our latest ALFAwetlands Policy Brief
https://alfawetlands.eu/policy-briefs/

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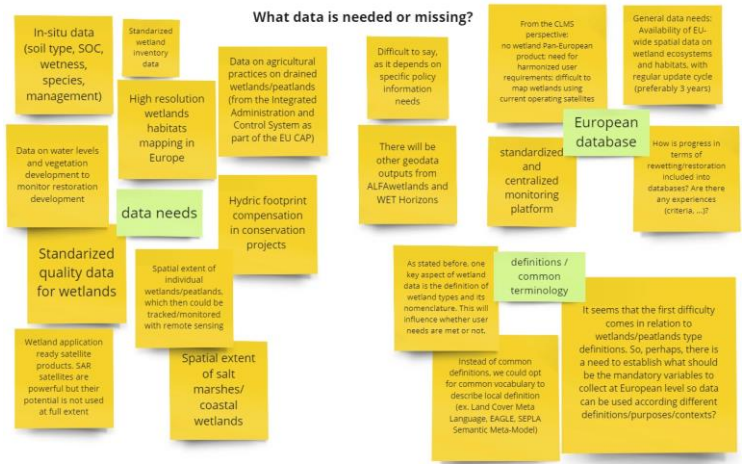
Exploring wetland (geo)data needs of policy instruments

- Objective within ALFAwetlands: assess needs of respective policy instruments regarding wetland data in terms of spatial resolution and comprehensiveness

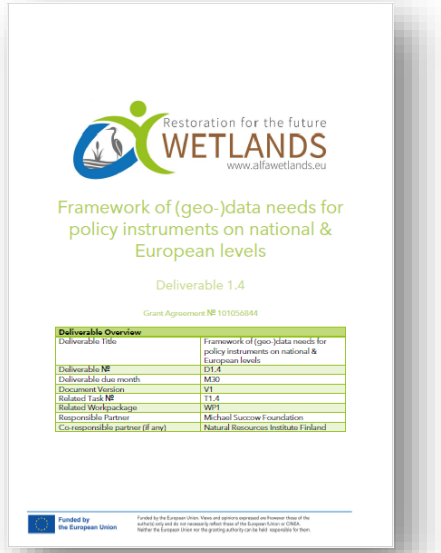
1st step:
Online Survey
Winter 2023/24



2nd step:
Interactive Online Workshop
Summer 2024



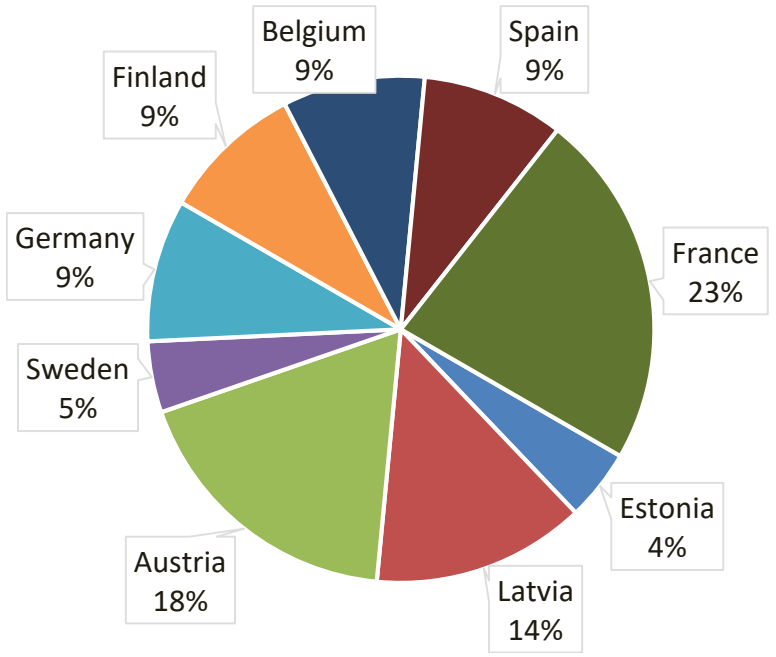
3rd step:
Report: Framework on Geodata needs
Autumn 2024



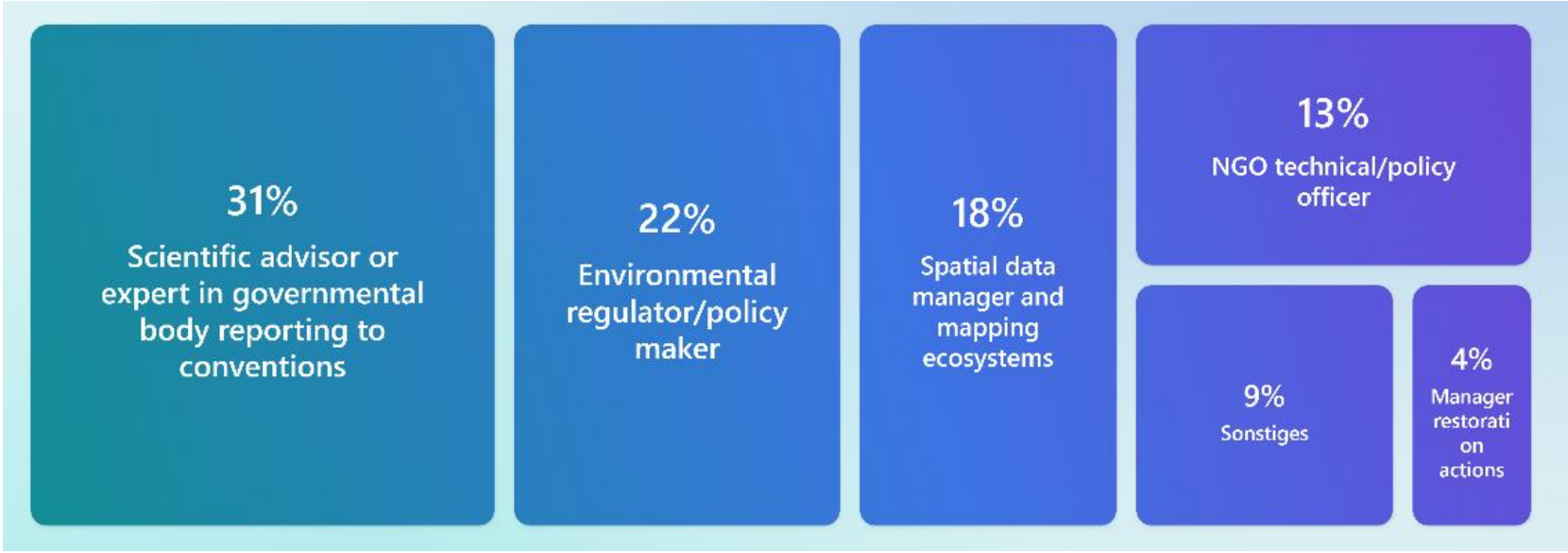
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Survey results: Participants and their roles



„How would you define your role?“



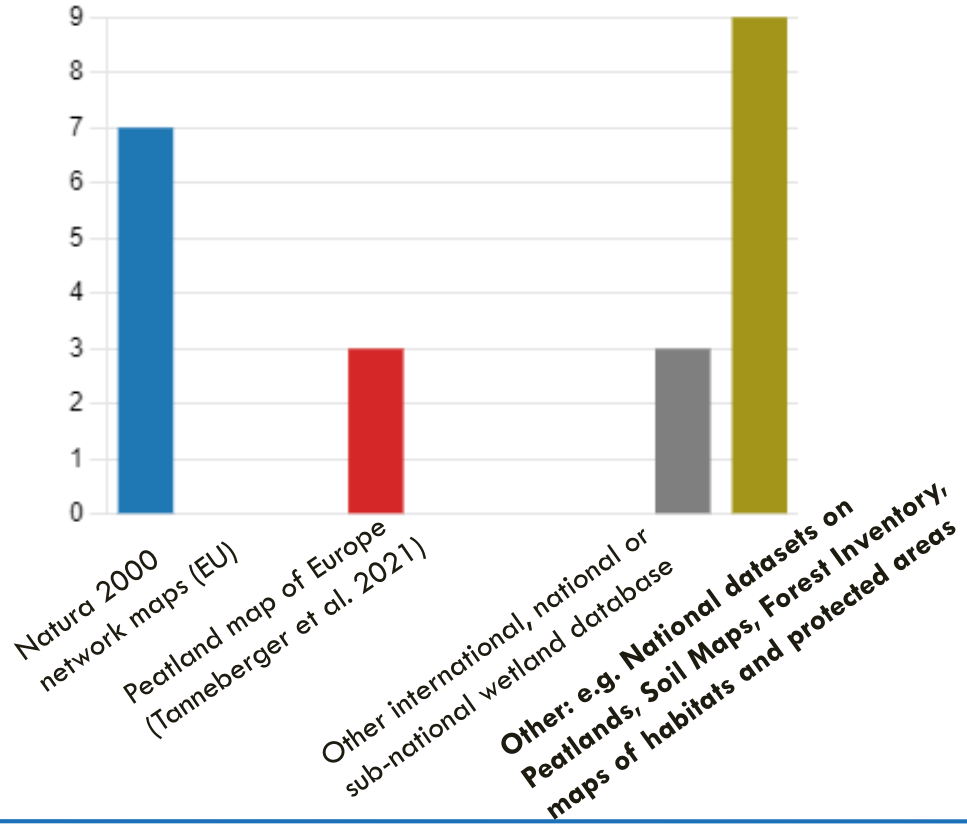
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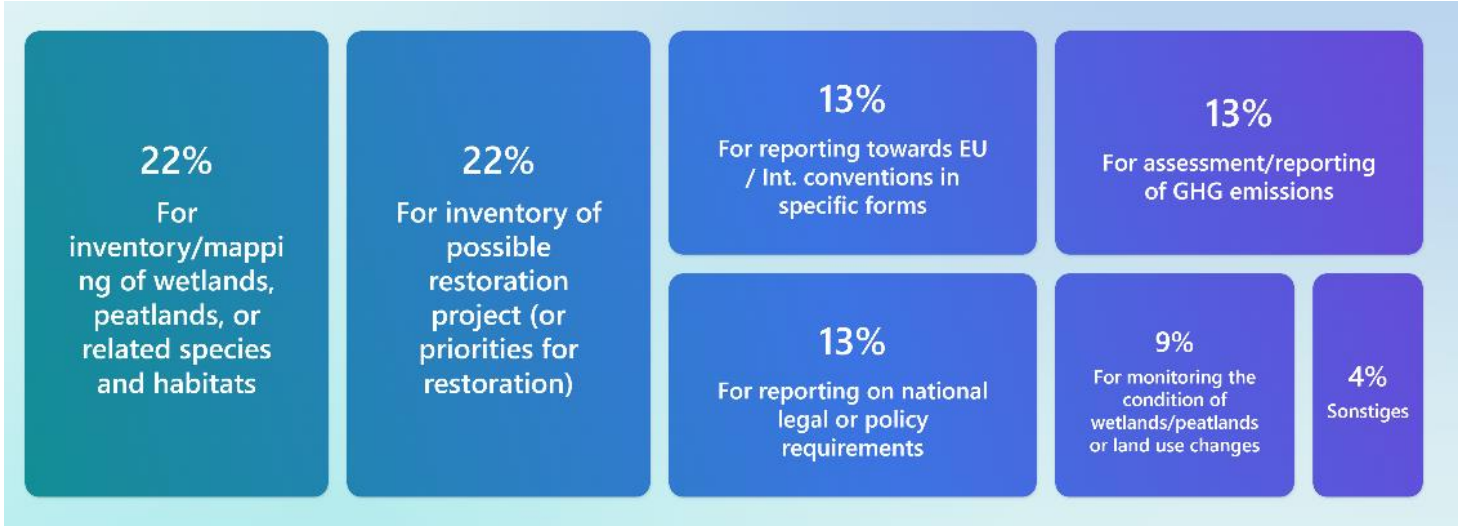
Survey results: Why is geo-data needed for policy instruments?

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„Which existing wetlands database do you use at the European and National levels?“



„For which purpose do you use the existing data on wetlands (peatlands, floodplains, coastal wetlands)?“



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Survey results: Current gaps & barriers

"What are the main gaps/barriers to obtain information or relevant data to your work on wetlands?"

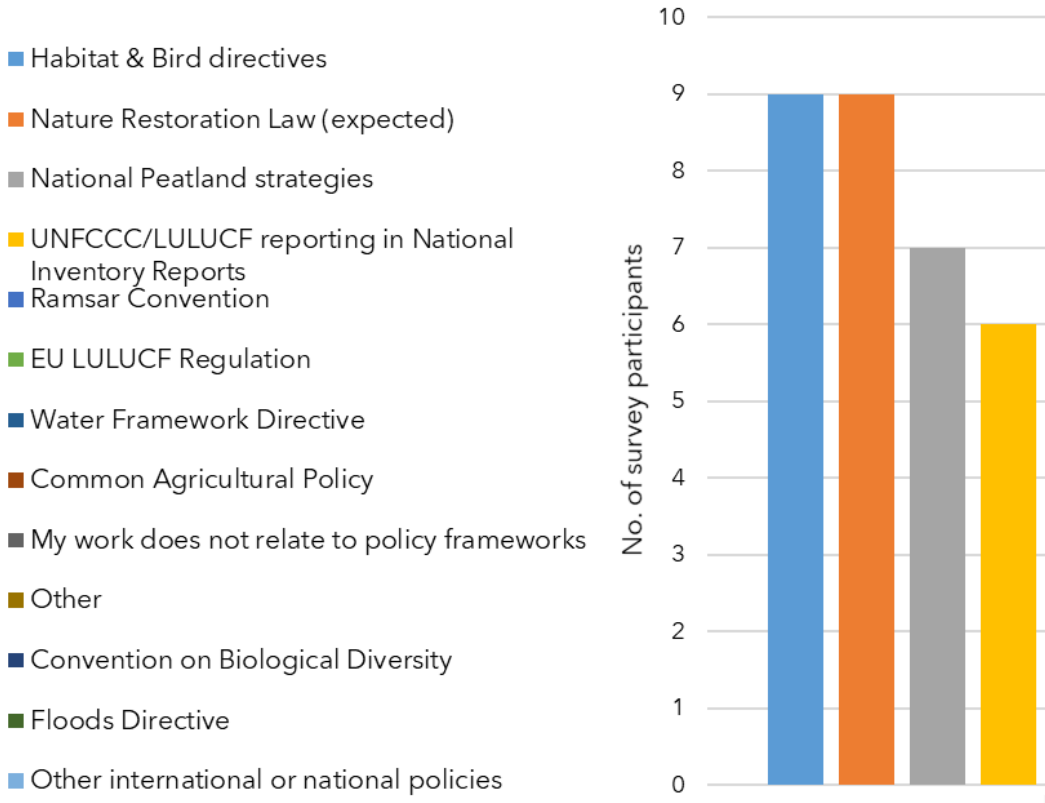


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Survey & Workshop results: Geo-data needs

"For which policy framework or directive do you need the data?"



Most important data priorities & aspects:

- presence and absence of peat
- degradation status of peatlands
- land use and land cover
- habitat type or presence of protected species
- wetland type

Data requirements:

- high-resolution spatial & temporal data
- preferably updated every three years

Data characteristics:

- downloadable, GIS-applicable data in vector or raster formats with accessible tables

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Recommendations

- necessity for a **pan-European product** became evident
  - **easily accessible** preferably a **wetland database or platform needed** - in compliance with existing regulations, e.g. General Data Protections Regulation (GDPR)
  - At best, platform would provide a **broad technical and EU-wide coverage** with a **common terminology on wetlands** as **"one-stop shop" solution** for (geo)data
- Currently, **obsolete and incomplete data on wetlands** in Europe result in underutilization of available information and **hamper prioritization of restoration needs** with regard to wetlands, especially on the EU level.
- **lack of data quality** contributes to the fact that the **development of wetland policy instruments requires more time and effort** – i.e. costs
- **Harmonization of the fragmented data on European wetlands is of ultimate importance for the success of the EU climate and biodiversity policies**

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Thanks for your attention!

Now listen up, to see what the European Wetland Map has to offer!

Marie Lorenz

Michael Succow Foundation

Partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre

marie.lorenz@succow-stiftung.de

Succow Stiftung

Partner in the

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