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Tooling in engaging stakeholders in adaptive water management with Nature-based solutions: reflections from an online NGT approach through the perspectives of the water professionals

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The global water sector is changing and it is in need of more evidence-based responses of emerging global, regional, national and local challenges. Communities are seeking interventions which achieve multiple benefits and outcomes such as: improved quality of water bodies, reduced greenhouse emissions, reliably delivered water for human use but also some that are rather urgent like: flood-risk management. In order to take into account the environmental, technological, economic, institutional and cultural characteristics of river basins, we need to move from current management regimes towards more adaptive regimes with the use of Nature-based solutions (NbS) instead of traditional 'grey' engineering approaches. Quite a vast amount of tools have been developed throughout the years for achieving this transition. This paper identifies the challenges and opportunities that water professionals face when using these tools in the process of planning NbS. An online tailor-made approach, based on a modified nominal group technique (NGT) and Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) was developed and applied. The NGT-based assessment of these tools consists of two rounds during which participants were asked to reflect first individually, and then collectively about the prerequisites and implications of these tools in the process of planning NbS. The participants are water professionals from the European project Co-Adapt. Here we presented one approach where new scientific methods and practical tools are developed for participatory assessment and implementation of adaptive water management.