

Hydropower impacts on river status components

Media support to represent the cause-effect relationships between status and pressure/impact and cross link

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Summary

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This document intends to describe the media support developed to represent cause-effect relationships between status and pressure/impact and cross link.

Interactive tables have been built to underline and specify which are the main pressure elements on ecosystem components due to HP facilities, showing for every HP facility the corresponding impact on each ecosystem status component and assigning to each one an impact value.

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Introduction

This document intends to describe the media support developed to represent cause-effect relationships between status and pressure/impact and cross link on river status components.

Interactive tables have been built to underline and specify which are the main pressure elements on ecosystem components due to HP facilities, showing for every HP facility the corresponding impact on each ecosystem status component and assigning to each one an impact value.

The tables resume hundred of scientific papers analyzed during the project implementation representing the more advanced and significant scientific articles in this domain.

All those papers are very focused on particular biological communities or / and specific impacts but they often do not give an overall view allowing the identification of more reactive river components and the definition of impacts size.

For the reasons above mentioned, we tried to compact in a media support a lot of spare information useful to support the better environmental indicators choice and Multi Criteria Analysis feeding.

HP IMPACTS	HP IMPACTS DEFINITION	HP EFFECTS	HP EFFECTS DEFINITION
<p>RESERVOIRS AND DAMS</p>	<p>A dam is a barrier that impounds water or underground streams. Dams generally serve the primary purpose of retaining water. [...] Hydropower and pumped-storage hydroelectricity are often used in conjunction with dams to generate electricity. A dam can also be used to collect water or for storage of water which can be evenly distributed between locations. [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]</p>	<p>Less of river continuity Reduced downstream current speed Increased upstream water depth Reduced downstream discharge Reduced downstream wetted area Reduced sediment and bed-load downstream transport High loads of suspended sediment for sediment flushing Sudden increase of water turbidity for sediment flushing Sudden increase of discharge and current speed for sediment flushing Increased upstream sedimentation and colimation of the interstitial Mitigation of natural floods and discharge fluctuations Fragmentation of habitats Turbine mortality and injuries</p>	<p>Dams and weirs interrupt the river continuum and affected the biology and ecology of several biota (interrupted fish migration) in riverine ecosystems. The reduction of the flow velocity altered the hydromorphological conditions and the habitat quality. Impounded river stretches are primarily characterized by a decreased flow velocity and an increased water volume. Reduction of water depth and a decrease of the ground-water level and altered the physico-chemical conditions in the residual water stretch. Reduced sediment and bed-load downstream transport altered the habitat conditions, and the habitat suitability for the typical aquatic biota of the ecosystems and the river system. The flushing event increases the water discharge and the loads of sediment. This affects immediately the macroinvertebrates and fish fauna. Decreased flow velocity leads to increased sedimentation in the tailrace of weirs/dams and altered the habitat conditions for the aquatic biota. Loss of the region typical habitat characteristics and habitat diversity. The migration of the hydrological condition of the system is caused by the renaturation of water courses. Dams and weirs interrupt the river continuum and affected the biology and ecology of several biota (interrupted fish migration) in riverine ecosystems. Sudden changes of hydrostatic pressure that can cause swim bladder rupture and bubble formation inside tissues. The power station devices (turbine) can cause mechanical damages or chop fish into pieces. Hydropeaking (surge and sunk periods) altered the physico-chemical condition (temperature, water chemistry, wetted area, ...) in riverine systems and affected the aquatic ecosystems. Flushing events increases suddenly the water discharge and the sediment load. This affects immediately benthic macroinvertebrates and fish fauna. The reduction of the stable wetted area in water courses is mainly the result of hydropeaking and water abstraction.</p>
<p>HYDROPEAKING</p>	<p>Surge waves and fast sinking of water levels is a typical effect of the power peaking management of reservoir hydro-power plants. Phases of still-stand and water storage are followed by phases of water release for electricity production. Hydropeaking means in general high load fluctuations in short time. Surge waves often offer adequate habitats for the typical flora and fauna. The banks and the soil are stabilized by loose rip-rap or concrete. Catastrophic drift of fish eggs and macroinvertebrates is often the consequence. When water levels are sinking again some aquatic organisms are don't able to reach the main flow channel or to find shelter in deeper soil layer and get captured in pools or stand on gravel banks. Dry falling of spawning grounds and nests are also major problems concerning fish populations.</p>	<p>Artificial hydrological regime with surge and sunk periods Sudden high currents with high sediment loads Reduced stable wetted area</p>	<p>Hydropeaking (surge and sunk periods) altered the physico-chemical condition (temperature, water chemistry, wetted area, ...) in riverine systems and affected the aquatic ecosystems. Flushing events increases suddenly the water discharge and the sediment load. This affects immediately benthic macroinvertebrates and fish fauna. The reduction of the stable wetted area in water courses is mainly the result of hydropeaking and water abstraction.</p>
<p>RIVER ENGINEERING STRUCTURES</p>	<p>For hydropower plants are a range of installations and structures as roads, powerhouse, power lines, dams and weirs. The structures are built in the river bed and the banks. They are often used to stabilize the banks and offer adequate habitats for the typical flora and fauna. The banks and the soil are stabilized by loose rip-rap or concrete. Catastrophic drift of fish eggs and macroinvertebrates is often the consequence. When water levels are sinking again some aquatic organisms are don't able to reach the main flow channel or to find shelter in deeper soil layer and get captured in pools or stand on gravel banks. Dry falling of spawning grounds and nests are also major problems concerning fish populations.</p>	<p>Loss of soil and bank dynamics Artificial or stabilized riverbeds, channels, pipings</p>	<p>The loss of hydromorphological dynamic is mostly the result of the reduced water discharge. Artificial constructions like dams and riverbed fixations affect riverine systems and their aquatic habitat.</p>
<p>Figure 6 – Impact indicators names</p>			
<p>The impact indicators names are listed in the table below. The intensity of the pressure depends on how much water is abstracted and it is measured by the remaining instream flow and the length of the section until the point of return.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hydrological regime in residual water stretches depends on the hydropower operation and management. Some hydropower operations use the whole discharge and a donation for the diversion stretch is missing; then the rivers fall completely dry. Only bigger flood events bring in some dynamic. In areas of decreased flow velocities suspended sediments sink down, deposit into the interstitial and can clog the gravel substrate. Proposed structures are to be exposed to high loads of sediment and turbidity of the water quality by nutrients, pollutants and organic matter. In reservoirs and in impounded stretches sand is deposited in special sedimentation chambers of the dam or the weir to protect the turbines. From time to time, depending on the size, the chambers must be emptied and the collected sediment gets flushed downstream. 			
<p>WATER DIVERSION/RUN OFF</p>			
<p>Source: SHARE - Criteria and indicators to identify vulnerable Alpine river ecosystems - Innsbruck – Austria, 07th October 2011 - Workshop on HP & river biological indicators - PPT presentation; SHARE - Short review & update of the effects of HP on biological communities - Innsbruck – Austria, 07th October 2011 - Workshop on HP & river biological indicators - PPT presentation; SHARE - Hydropower impacts on Alpine river ecosystems - 2nd Draft - WP5 - Action 5.3 - deliverable WP5-35.</p>			

3. Impact code

This table (Figure 7) defines **4 different degree of impact** that every HP facility and its related effects *could* have on each river ecosystem status component and its associated impact value and a full/short description of each of them.

- 0 = no impact
- 1 = small impact
- 2 = significant impact
- 3 = high impact

IMPACT	DEFINITION	VALUE
No impact	Absence of impact on the considered river ecosystem component	0
Small impact	Presence of a slight impact on the considered river ecosystem component	1
Significant impact	Presence of an important impact on the considered river ecosystem component	2
High impact	Presence of an elevated impact on the considered river ecosystem component	3

Figure 7 – Definition of the impact code

4. Work sheet for Pivot table

The “4 Work sheet for Pivot table” contains the same data present in the "1HP impact on river components" sheet but rearranged to allow the Pivot tables feeding.

5. HP schemes versus status components

MEAN IMPACT VALUE		STATUS COMPONENTS		IMPACT TARGET				
HP SCHEMES IMPACTS	HP IMPACTS	# BENTHIC MACROINVERTEBRATES	# FISH FAUNA	# MACROPHYTES	# PHYTOBENTHOS	# RIPARIAN VEGETATION		
RESERVOIRS AND DAMS	Fragmentation of habitats	2,00	3,00	2,00	0,00	2,00		
	High loads of suspended sediment for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	0,00	2,00		
	Increased upstream sedimentation and colmatation of the interstitial	1,00	3,00	2,00	1,00	2,00		
	Increased upstream water depth	0,80	3,00	2,00	1,00	2,00		
	Loss of river continuity	1,00	3,00	2,00	1,00	1,00		
	Mitigation of natural floods and discharge fluctuations	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,00	2,00		
	Reduced downstream current speed	0,80	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00		
	Reduced downstream wetted area	3,00	3,00	3,00	0,00	2,00		
	Reduced downstream discharge	1,60	3,00	2,00	1,00	2,00		
	Reduced sediment and bed-load downstream transport	0,80	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00		
	Sudden increase of discharge and current speed for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	0,00	2,00		
	Sudden increase of water turbidity for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	0,00	2,00		
	Turbine mortality and injuries	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00		
	RESERVOIRS AND DAMS Subtotal		1,62	2,46	2,08	0,46	1,69	
HYDROPEACKING	Artificial hydrological regime with surge and sunk periods	3,00	3,00	2,00	2,00	1,00		
	Reduced stable wetted area	3,00	3,00	3,00	0,00	1,00		
	Sudden high currents with high sediment loads	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,00	1,00		
HYDROPEACKING Subtotal		3,00	3,00	2,67	1,33	1,00		
RIVER ENGINEERING STRUCTURES	Artificial or stabilized riverbeds, channels, pipings	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	2,00		
	Loss of soil and bank dynamics	3,00	3,00	2,00	1,00	2,00		
RIVER ENGINEERING STRUCTURES Subtotal		3,00	3,00	2,50	1,00	2,00		
WATER DIVERSION/RUN OFF	High loads of suspended sediment for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	1,00		
	Increased upstream sedimentation and colmatation of the interstitial	1,00	2,00	2,00	0,00	0,00		
	Mitigation of natural floods and discharge fluctuations	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00		
	Reduced downstream discharge	1,60	3,00	2,00	1,00	1,00		
	Reduced downstream water depth	0,80	3,00	2,00	1,00	0,00		
	Reduced downstream wetted area	3,00	3,00	0,00	0,00	1,00		
	Reduced downstream current speed	0,80	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00		
	Sudden increase of discharge and current speed for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	1,00		
	Sudden increase of water turbidity for sediment flushing	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	1,00		
	Turbine mortality and injuries	0,00	2,00	0,00	0,00	0,00		
WATER DIVERSION/RUN OFF Subtotal		1,72	2,50	1,90	0,70	0,70		
Total		1,90	2,57	2,11	0,68	1,29		

Figure 8 – HP schemes versus status components table

This is the **Pivot table** (Figure 8) connecting effects of HP schemes impacts the river ecosystem status components. This table can be used to detect if and how much specific HP facilities *could* produce an impact on the river ecosystem status components.

The first column "**HP schemes impacts**" allows to **flag the specific HP schemes impacts** to consider choosing among the 4 identified as explained in the “1 HP impacts on river components” paragraph.

The second column "**HP impacts**" allows to **flag for each HP schemes impacts the related HP effects** identified as explained in the “1 HP impacts on river components” paragraph.

The following column "**status components**" allows to **flag and screen river ecosystem status components** to be considered in each specific case (i.e. benthic macroinvertebrates, fish fauna, macrophytes, hydrological regime and riparian vegetation could be considered but **not** phyto-benthos because less reactive or / and due to lack of data related to this community).

The "impact target" column allows to **flag and screen for each flagged river ecosystem status components the target elements** to consider in each specific case (i.e. for fish fauna: fish size, fish age structures and fish species richness but **not** fish species quality because of genetic data lack).

The **Values Field** shows the impact value assigned to each impact target element reflecting the effect of each HP impact as the Subtotal rules and columns show the mean value for each components/elements group.

After flagging components and elements to consider in the specific case in the "7HP versus status components graph" sheet, it is possible to draw an **interactive graph** showing for each HP scheme which are the **status components more affected by each HP facilities**.

6. Status components versus HP schemes

MEAN IMPACT VALUE		HP SCHEMES IMPACTS				Total
STATUS COMPONENTS		≡ RIVER ENGINEERING STRUCTURES	≡ RESERVOIRS AND DAMS	≡ HYDROPEACKING	≡ WATER DIVERSION/RUN OFF	Total
≡ BENTHIC MACROINVERTEBRATES AND HYPOREIC FAUNA	IMPACT TARGET					
	Benthic community composition	3.00	1.92	3.00		2.00 2.14
	Benthic community structure	3.00	1.92	3.00		2.00 2.14
	EPT composition	3.00	1.46	3.00		1.60 1.79
	Total number of EPT [Taxa richness]	3.00	1.46	3.00		1.60 1.79
	Total number of taxa [Taxa richness]	3.00	1.31	3.00		1.40 1.64
	Subtotal	3.00	1.62	3.00		1.72 1.90
≡ FISH FAUNA						
	Fish age structures	3.00	2.38	3.00		2.50 2.54
	Fish size	3.00	2.38	3.00		2.50 2.54
	Fish species quality	3.00	2.54	3.00		2.50 2.61
	Fish species richness	3.00	2.54	3.00		2.50 2.61
	Subtotal	3.00	2.46	3.00		2.50 2.57
≡ RIPARIAN VEGETATION						
	Riparian vegetation community composition	2.00	1.69	1.00		0.70 1.29
	Riparian vegetation species quality	2.00	1.69	1.00		0.70 1.29
	Riparian vegetation species richness	2.00	1.69	1.00		0.70 1.29
	Subtotal	2.00	1.69	1.00		0.70 1.29
≡ HYDROLOGICAL REGIME						
	Bankfull width variability	3.00	1.69	3.00		0.90 1.64
	Flooding dynamics	3.00	1.92	3.00		1.10 1.83
	Flow velocity variability	2.00	1.46	3.00		0.80 1.43
	Maximum depth variability	2.00	1.69	3.00		0.90 1.57
	Mean depth variability	2.00	1.62	3.00		0.80 1.50
	Subtotal	2.40	1.69	3.00		0.90 1.53
≡ RIVER BED STRUCTURE AND SUBSTRATE						
	River bed dynamics, structure & grain size distribution	1.00	1.77	2.00		0.90 1.43
	River bed permeability & colmatation	1.00	0.85	1.00		0.40 0.71
	Subtotal	1.00	1.31	1.50		0.65 1.07
≡ PHYSICO-CHEMICAL PARAMETERS						
	Biological oxygen demand	0.00	1.00	1.00		0.50 0.75
	Chemical oxygen demand	0.00	0.16	0.67		0.10 0.18
	Concentration of dissolved oxygen	0.00	1.08	1.00		0.40 0.75
	Conductivity	0.00	0.62	1.00		0.30 0.50
	Nitrate	0.00	0.31	0.33		0.00 0.18
	pH	0.00	0.45	0.67		0.20 0.36
	Salinity	0.00	0.62	1.33		0.40 0.57
	Temperature	0.00	0.85	2.00		0.30 0.71
	Total nitrogen	0.00	0.31	0.33		0.00 0.18
	Total phosphorus	0.00	0.23	0.33		0.00 0.14
	Subtotal	0.00	0.56	0.87		0.22 0.43
	Total	1.62	1.37	1.95		0.99 1.31

Figure 9 – Status components versus HP schemes

This is the **Pivot table** (Figure 9) connecting river ecosystem status components with effects of HP schemes impacts.

This table can be used to **detect which are the river ecosystem status components affected by HP and how much they are affected by specific HP facilities**.

The first column "**status components**" allows to flag and screen river ecosystem status components to consider in each specific case (i.e. benthic macroinvertebrates, fish fauna, macrophytes, hydrological regime and riparian vegetation could be considered but **not** phytobenthos because less reactive or / and due to lack of data related to this community).

The second column "**impact target**" allows to flag and screen for each flagged river ecosystem status components the target elements to consider in each specific case (i.e. for fish fauna: fish size, fish age structures and fish species richness but **not** fish species quality because of genetic data lack).

The following column "**HP schemes impacts**" allows to flag the specific HP schemes impacts to consider choosing among the 4 identified as explained in the "1 HP impacts on river components" paragraph.

The following column "**HP impacts**" allows to flag for each flagged HP schemes impacts the related HP effects identified as explained in the "1 HP impacts on river components" paragraph.

The **Values Field** shows the impact value assigned to each impact target element reflecting the effect of each HP impact as the Subtotal rules and columns show the mean value for each components/elements group.

After flagging components and elements to consider in the specific case, in the "8 Status components versus HP schemes graph" sheet, it is possible to draw an **interactive graph** showing, for each river ecosystem status component the **HP schemes and HP impacts producing more significant effects on impact targets**.

7. HP schemes versus status components graph

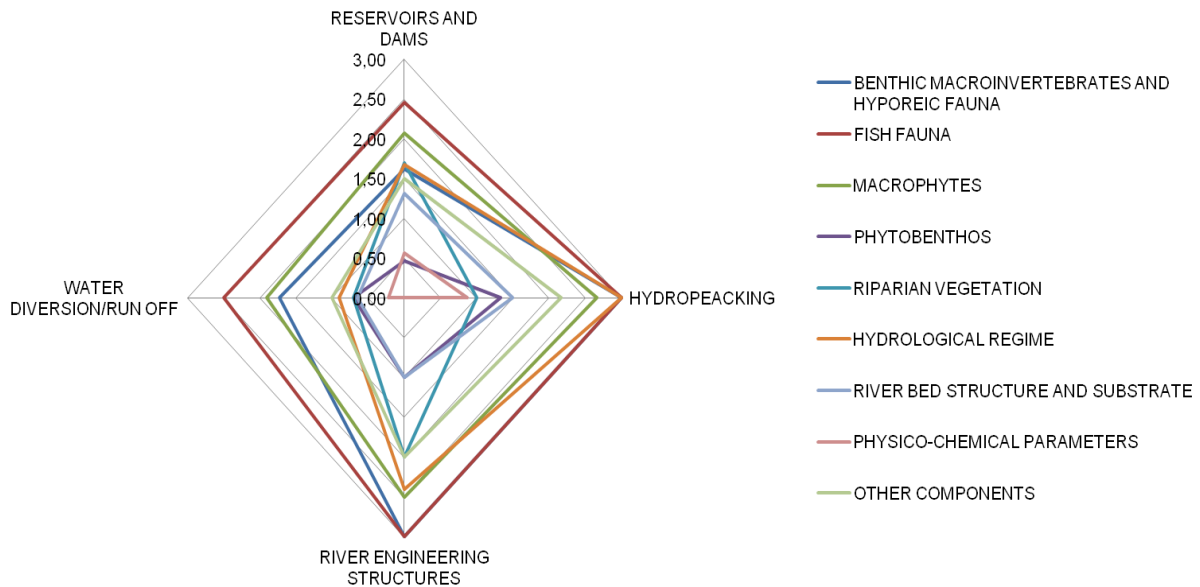


Figure 10 – HP schemes versus status components graph

After flagging components and elements to consider in the specific case in the Pivot table called "HP versus status components ", in the "HP schemes versus status components graph" sheet, it is possible to draw an **interactive graph** showing for each HP scheme which are the **status components more affected by each HP facilities** (Figure 10).

8. Status components versus HP schemes graph

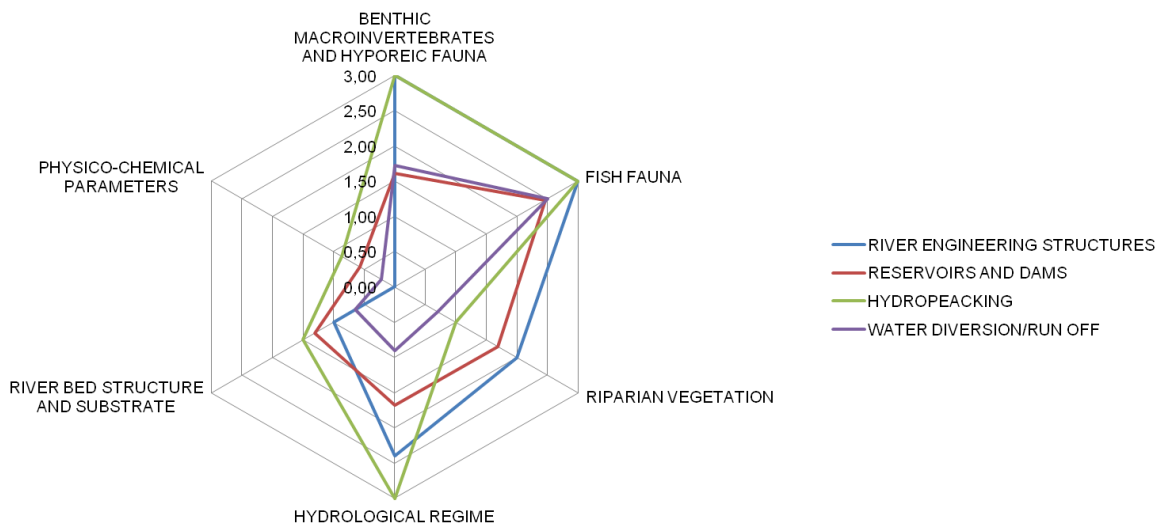


Figure 11 – Status components versus HP schemes graph

After flagging components and elements to consider in the specific case in the Pivot table called "Status components versus HP schemes ", in the "Status components versus HP schemes graph" sheet it is possible to draw an **interactive graph** showing, for each river ecosystem status component, which are the **HP schemes and HP impacts who produce more effects on the impact targets**(Figure 11).

9. List of status components indices

This table shows a list of the main Indices available for each river ecosystem component evaluation for Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia.