



**Press Release**  
**Embargoed until 00.01 hours 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT PLEDGE  
LAUNCHED TODAY @COP26**

Climate change is an existential threat. The lead up to COP26<sup>i</sup> in Glasgow has illustrated the urgency of tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. There is a need for action, across all sectors, to decarbonise – while at the same time strengthening resilience and adapting to the changing climate.

Sediments are integral to the resilience of aquatic systems, the building block for natural habitats and an inherent component of many ecosystem services<sup>ii</sup>. Sediments and their associated aquatic habitats, referred to as ‘blue carbon’ stocks, also play a vital role in sequestering and storing carbon.

Our Sediment Management Pledge<sup>iii</sup> launched today during the UNFCCC Marrakech Partnership ‘Resilience Action’ Event at COP26, recognises the important work of sediment managers in protecting and enhancing these critical, inter-related natural processes. Our ambitious but realistic – and very necessary – pledge is an outcome of the February 2021 virtual workshop<sup>iv</sup> ‘Sediment management opportunities to address the climate change challenge’; a workshop hosted jointly by Navigating a Changing Climate<sup>v</sup> and SedNet<sup>vi</sup>.

Even before the official launch of our pledge today, more than 20 organisations from around the world, including Government departments, major ports, dredging companies, research institutes, NGOs and many private sector organisations have already signed up<sup>vii</sup>.

SedNet and the NavClimate partners now encourage all other organisations that work with sediments – scientists and researchers, water managers, port and waterway operators, flood protection managers and those in the dredging and construction sector – to follow the lead of these front-runners. Please, show that you recognise the crucial role of sediments. Endorse our pledge; and work with us to identify and deliver solutions that benefit not only climate and nature, but also society and economies.

Details about the pledge and how to endorse it can be found at <https://sednet.org/climate-change-and-sediment-management-pledge/>.

Jan Brooke, Focal Point of the Navigating a Changing Climate initiative from 2015-2021 says:

“Many of those in the transport sector, particularly but not only waterborne transport, work with sediments. So too do other types of infrastructure providers and managers: those working in flood protection, erosion control, water supply and storage, hydropower, tidal energy, and other waterside or offshore facilities or developments. Some of these organisations have already made the switch from regarding sediment as a waste to recognising it as an important natural resource bringing a range of opportunities. But many have not. As we launch our pledge today, I ask those sediment managers who share our ambitions to sign up. And I ask those who do not currently share these ambitions to think about our planet, and particularly about those people in many parts of the world whose lives or livelihoods depend on the ecosystem services that well-managed sediments can provide. If you’re involved in sediment management, and you don’t share our ambitions – why not?”

Marc Eisma, Chairman of SedNet, says:

“SedNet welcomes everybody to sign up and we will be very open to collaborate to fulfil the pledge because sediments are an important resource which needs protection and targeted management. Achieving a sustainable balance between the development and management of infrastructure and meeting ecosystem objectives (i.e. reaching good ecological status and protecting ecosystem functions) will depend on constructive dialogue between various stakeholders, better policy coordination and effective transboundary cooperation. Where human activities interfere with sediment quantity or quality, sediment management becomes necessary. If we are to manage sediment for environmental objectives (e.g. maintaining habitats) and/or for the needs of society (e.g. dredging to maintain navigation), this should be undertaken with a full awareness of impacts on nature and society within the river basin. Effective sediment management requires a holistic approach taking into account (a) system understanding both in terms of quality and quantity, (b) the integrated management of soil, water and sediment, (c) upstream-downstream relationships, and (d) supra-regional and transboundary collaboration.”<sup>viii</sup>

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## **Notes**

<sup>i</sup> The COP26 summit in November 2021 is bringing together parties and stakeholders with the intention of accelerating action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; see <https://ukcop26.org/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Ecosystem services – the benefits that nature provides to humans – include protection from flooding or erosion, products such as food, water and fuel, nursery areas for baby fish and other species, water purification, nature-based recreation and tourism, health and wellbeing, and many more.

<sup>iii</sup> See <https://sednet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Sediment-Pledge.pdf>

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<sup>iv</sup> The workshop summary document can be downloaded at <https://sednet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Summary-and-outcomes-NavClimate-SedNet.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Navigating a Changing Climate (<https://navclimate.pianc.org>) is a UNFCCC Global Climate Action initiative (<https://climateaction.unfccc.int/Initiatives>). The partners in this initiative work together to provide technical support to the inland and maritime navigation infrastructure sector as they respond to climate change. NavClimate was led by PIANC, the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure until late 2021 when The Resilience Shift (<https://www.resilienceshift.org>) took the helm.

<sup>vi</sup> SedNet (<https://sednet.org>) is a European-based network of sediment experts from science, administrations and industry. SedNet focuses on all types of sediment quality and quantity issues on a river basin scale, ranging from freshwater to estuarine and marine sediments, including the development of new tools for sediment management.

<sup>vii</sup> A list of organisations that have already signed the pledge can be found by scrolling down at <https://sednet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Sediment-Pledge.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> For this and more SedNet key-messages please see “Moving Sediment Management Forward - The Four SedNet Messages” at <https://sednet.org/download/Moving-Sediment-Management-Forward.pdf>