Public Participation and Solidarity in Basin Management

Local Innovations and Lessons Learned

Linking-up the public for sustainable water management in the Rhine basin

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On behalf of the RhineNet team
RhineNet and INTERREG IIIB

Interreg III B

- Initiative of the European Fund for Regional Development
- Fostering collaboration of regions in the European Union in the period from 2000 – 2006

INTERREG IIIB Program Northwest-Europe

- Support of transnational collaboration in Northwestern Europe with several action foci: e.g Sustainable Management of Water Resources
RhineNet Partners

- Solidarité Eau Europe (F) (*initiator and coordinator*)
- Naturlandstiftung Saar (D) (*lead partner*)
- Agglomeration Saarguemines Confluences (F)
- Federal Association of Citizens‘ Initiatives for the Environment (D)
- Ecologic (D)
- European Rivers Network (F)
- Foundation Hëllef fir die Natur (L)

- Ministry for Environment and Transport of Baden-Wurttemberg (D),
- Office International de l'Eau (F)
- Regiowasser e.V. (D)
- Reinwater Foundation (NL)
- Environment Agency of Karlsruhe City (D)
- Environment Ministry of Saarland (D)
This map shows major European and Middle Eastern rivers with their basins. Approximate catchment areas is about 10,000 km². Map in decimal degrees, not projected.

Support: European Rivers Network

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Countries in the Rhine basin
The Netherlands
France
Germany
Switzerland
Luxembourg
Belgium
Austria
Liechtenstein
Italy

Tributaries
Main
Meuse
Moselle
Neckar
Aar
Who are the stakeholders of RhineNet?

**RhineNet partners**
- NGO, ministries, and research institutes (innovation)
- Interested to link-up their activities to reach a broader audience
- Exchange of ideas and approaches and learn from each other

**Target groups**

Authorities
- Different levels
- Benefit from best practices

Broad public
- Awareness raising for the protection of intact river systems
- Capacity-building for active participation
- Comprises many different audiences
Public Participation Tool/s & Process

Innovation
- Linking of various participation projects in the Rhine basin
- Identification of synergies
- Testing of new approaches for actively involving the broad public and stakeholders

What we achieved
- In-depth study of participation in the Rhine area
- Information events and workshops in the basin
- Development of a methodological guide for public participation at the regional and local level
- Incorporation of the transboundary perspective into participation at the local level: awareness raising
- Local level: consultation about the future measures to be taken in the Rhine basin
- Testing of new methods: farmers’ game
Public Participation Tool/s & Process

Rhine-Study: Results
- Good basis for public participation in the Rhine basin
- Various approaches, but not necessarily active involvement

Information sessions
- Development of a model concept for information sessions
- Several sessions and workshops throughout the Rhine basin targeted at different audiences
- Development of an educational program about public participation

Guide
- Part 1: Basic approaches and methods for public participation
- Part 2: Approaches taken in the Rhine basin, illustration of theoretical approaches
- Part 3: Lessons learnt, do’s and don’ts
- Consultation: discussion fora
Awareness raising

BIG JUMP 2005
  – Bathing as a direct experience of intact nature and systems

Rivers of Images, Streams of Words
  – Targeted at students, cultural aspect of water management
Lessons Learned

• Public participation is important at all levels of river basin management
• Different languages, different administrative approaches and cycles are a considerable barrier
• Preparation for participation: training about methodologies
• Initiatives need to be geared to meet the demands of the target groups
  • Requires that specific water culture in the basin is taken into account
• International river basins call for the linking of relevant actors between countries and regions
  • RhineNet offers a platform and a good starting point
Transferability of our Process & Tool/s

Opportunities
- Strong methodological basis
- Creative approaches geared to the target audience: broad public
- Interlinked multi-level activities
- Step-by-step approach including methodological development as well as hands-on experience

Constraints
- Long history of public involvement in the Rhine basin
- Democratic regimes and strong institutional background
- Open dialogue for a long time
Conclusions

Further activities!!!

– Do not stop at this stage – it is still only the beginning!
– The RhineNet should continue and **link up with even more initiatives** throughout the basin.
– Establishment of **regular forum for the exchange** of information and the initiation of activities.
– While collaboration and interaction at the local level is working quite well, institutional obstacles in the riparian countries still need to be overcome.