PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE RIVER BASIN PLANNING PROCESS IN SPAIN

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Public Participation Project in the new Hydrological Planning Cycle

The Directorate for Water elaborated in 2006 a master document on Public Participation to coordinate public participation projects in the Spanish river basin districts.

This master document develops the contents of the Water Planning Regulation, according to the Spanish Water Law.
The Spanish river basins districts have elaborated their public participation projects in 2007 in agreement with the master document elaborated by the Directorate for Water.

Projects are available in the Ministry of Environment and in the River Basin District web-sites.
Contents of the Public Participation Project

- The organization of the public participation processes of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).
- Requirements for public information, public consultation of the planning process, active participation and working program documents.
- Methods and participation techniques to use in the different phases of the process and for the different levels of action.
The public consultation of the initial documents in the river basin planning process was announced in the State Official Bulletin in 25/07/07.
Presentation and public debate of the consultation documents

- National event celebrated on 19 September 2007 in the Ministry of Environment on the initial documents prepared for river basin planning (working programme, timetable and consultation formulae).

- Round Table with main stakeholders

- Open to the interested public, counting with the participation of Portugal.

- Similar events are taking place in the different river basins districts.
Conclusions of the presentation and public debate of consultation documents

• Consensus of the optimism generated by the new process.
• Traditional users expressed fear of losing influence and decision capacity.
• NGOs ask to improve the way we are communicating this complex process to the society.
• Expectation on the reform of the River Basins Water Councils.
• Need of promoting an international bilateral public participation (PT-ES).
Internal Workshop on Public Participation

• Workshop celebrated on October 2007 for the Heads of Water Planning Departments of River Basins Districts.

• Objective: development of a common strategy on public participation.

• Public Participation processes are compared with other European countries (Environmental Agency of the UK) and with regional governments (Catalonian Water Agency).
Conclusions of the Internal Workshop on Public Participation

- **Weakness**: new process (lack of experience, uncertainties), limited human and economic resources, lack of awareness on the participation process importance.

- **Threats**: complex administrative organization, lack of trust on Public Administration of some sectors, social sectors not organized, multiple problems and conflicts associated to water.

- **Strengths**: high commitment from central administration, long tradition on river basin planning with participation of users, experience on managing conflicting areas, consolidated networks and organizations.

- **Opportunities**: improve coordination among administrations, increase human resources in the participation sector, support from the European policy framework.
Web-site of the Ministry of Environment

Information available on:
www.mma.es and web-sites of river basins

Participation mail box that receives comments and suggestions:
buzon_participacionPH@mma.es