The Water Framework Directive
- Sharing experiences and meeting future challenges –
Meeting of the European Basin District Authorities
STOCKHOLM, Sweden, August 19-21, 2009

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANS
AND
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Short overview on water management in France and Rhine Maas basin management plans
Water management in France combines:

- Regulation
- Polluter pays principle
- Participation of stakeholders
- Planning on a river basin scale
Water agencies to apply the polluter pays principle and basin committees to involve stakeholders in the elaboration of the management plan.

- 6 water agencies and 6 basin committees in France

- Budget: €2 billion/year (from charges)
A strong international context at the border with Switzerland, Germany, Luxemburg Netherlands and Belgium

- 2 international river basin districts:
  - Rhine district (9 countries concerned)
  - Maas district (4 countries concerned)

Population: 4,2 million inhabitants
Area: 31 400 sq.km
Example of an important issue: ecological continuity

**Water and biodiversity:**
Salmon’s return into the Rhine and its tributaries passing through big dams
Status of surface waters in the French Rhine-Maas basin part (ecological status)

**CURRENT STATUS**
- No good status: 63%
- Very good or good status: 37%

**OBJECTIVES**
- Good status or potential 2015: 69%
- Good status or potential 2021: 12%
- Good status or potential 2027: 19%
Status of ground waters in the Rhine-Maas french basin part

**CURRENT STATUS**
- Good status: 50%
- No good status: 50%

**OBJECTIVES**
- RECONQUEST of the good status in 2027
1.9 billion euro to reach the good status for 2/3 of the water bodies in 2015
▶ 75 euro / inhabitant / year

4.0 billion euro to reach the good status of all the water bodies in 2027
▶ 1000 euro / inhabitant
2008
Public consultation in the French Rhine-Maas River basin
All the basin committees adopted the same consultation strategy (derivative of the Rhin-Meuse pilot action in 2005).

- A questionnaire sent to each household in each basin.
- But with various degrees of depth: 4, 10 or 15 questions.
The consultation method in the French Rhine-Maas basin part ...

> 1.8 million questionnaires sent in the mailboxes in the French part of the Rhine-Meuse basin at the end of May 2008
(28 million questionnaires at the national level)

> The questionnaire was also available on Internet:

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... with the support of a communication campaign

Two friendly mascots

Press banners or ¼ p. quadri
On cover TV weekly magazines
1 page in weekly press
Radio ads:
8 per day / 5 days

TV ads: 2 per day / 14 days

... with the support of a communication campaign
and a dedicated internet website also in foreign languages
Partnership with NGOs

7 partner NGOs involved in the public consultation as relays with the water agency

- 3 environmental protection NGOs
- 1 fishing federation
- 3 consumer’s NGOs

Grants from the Water Agency: 63,000 Euros

7689 informed (public debates)
An important public participation

- 81,000 questionnaires returned:
  - 77,340 paper questionnaires
  - 3,660 by internet

- 40% of questionnaires included spontaneous texts

- 150 local debates organized by NGOs
The costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire (Printing, dispatch, processing of the answers)</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting media planning</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploitation of the results</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign design</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
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- Cost / inhabitant: 0.20 € / inhabitant
- Costs / programme of measures: 0.2 %
To sum up this experience

**Audience success**

- A very large response: 400,000 returns
- A very varied public: Mr & Mrs Every Day
- Very many free opinions, show an interest and a wish to be heard
- An overwhelming preference for “paper” consultation

**Relative agreement to pay**

- Agree to finance the water policy more … but not necessarily via the water bill
- Overwhelming preference for the application of the polluter pays principle

**Pollutions, top priority subjects**

- Farming and industrial pollution in first place
- Very major interest in price and water saving
- Less interest in environments

**A strong desire to act**

- The practically unanimous acceptance of changes in daily life
- The wish to see all the stakeholders do likewise
How were the opinions taken into account?

- The **basin committee** devoted a complete working session to **examine the results of the public consultation**.

- An **additional document** to the management plan reflecting the internal evolutions due to the public consultation was worked out.

- A **feedback** concerning the results of the consultation and the consequences was organized for the public.
Main evolutions concerning the management plan after the public consultation

- To reinforce the pace for the good status winning back
- To optimise financial efforts
- To accelerate the re-establishment of ecological continuity
- To emphasize the reduction of agricultural pollution
Main subjects requiring extra work

- Informing citizens
- Facilitating conversion to organic farming
- Level of efforts required from stakeholders?
Conclusions

- A strong interest of public for water quality
- An appropriate consultation method:
  The paper questionnaire in the mailbox gave people time to understand the subject and the issues. A various public was reached and this way really enabled to consult Mr and Mrs Everyday
- The degree of response varied from one basin to another:
  - more than 4% in the Rhine-Meuse basin,
  - less than 1% in Seine-Normandie and especially in major towns (Paris – Lyon)
- An open question:
  Should the method be used again for a next consultation?
Thank you for your attention