

PROJECT

Democracy
Water

Public Participation in the Havel River Basin (Berlin-Brandenburg)

Ecologic completed a report reviewing and evaluating practices of public participation in water management in the Havel river basin for the implementation of the EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD). Project results were presented by Nicole Kranz at the TU Berlin workshop on 'Public involvement in river basin management' on 9/10 February 2004. The project report is available for download.

Background

Public participation becomes more and more important in environmental decision-making. In 1998, the Convention of Aarhus formulated the right of the public to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters in a comprehensive way for the first time. The EC Water Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted in the spirit of this convention. Article 14 of the Directive clearly expresses that active involvement of all interested parties shall be encouraged and that the public has to be informed and consulted. The development of innovative participation models is necessary to fulfil the Directive's requirements in this context. But innovation does not necessarily entail the design of entirely new structures and methods. The point is more that the conception of participation processes should be based on a sound analysis of existing participation cultures and their respective stakeholder structures. This will be the starting point for the development of new concepts.

Objectives

The project's objectives include the compilation and evaluation of past and present approaches to public participation in decision-making on water management in the Havel coordination area (Berlin-Brandenburg) as a basis for the further development of future participation practices in the context of WFD implementation.

Method

Based on an analysis of the current situation in water management, the most important stakeholders in the Havel coordination area were identified. The analysis included a review of the relevant literature as well as discussions with experts from different backgrounds. In the following step, interviews were conducted with the identified actors focusing on the characterization of the respective stakeholder group concerning their specific interests, their experiences with public participation as well as their interaction with other groups. New options for future participation procedures in the context of the implementation of the WFD were developed as a result of the ensuing analysis.

Project report

The [report](#) [1] [pdf, 589 KB, German] is divided into four sections. Section One characterizes the project region highlighting its special features. The principles for effective participation are summarized in the second part of the report, along with a brief description of the evolution of the environmental movement in the area of Berlin-Brandenburg within the last three decades. The first two parts demonstrate that the Havel coordination area is firstly characterized by structural contrasts like the differences between the high density area of Berlin City and the more rural environment of Brandenburg's regions, and secondly by the division of Germany and the transitional period of the German reunification. The main issues of water management and its respective stakeholders are discussed in the third section of the report. The research makes evident that the particular preconditions of the area are also reflected by the issues and their stakeholder structure. It was shown that some of the stakeholders have quite an extensive activity field, whereas others are focused on specific themes. The fourth section describes the public participation methods as they have been applied up to now in the coordination area, and their interpretation from the point of view of the stakeholders. Implications of the results of the survey on the implementation of the WFD are summarized in a concluding evaluation, and recommendations on the further proceedings in the Havel coordination area are made in a final outlook.

The results of this project will be integrated in the research project HarmoniCOP, which is supported by the Directorate General in the European Union's Framework 5 Programme for Research and Development and in which Ecologic also participates. Some of the aspects of this report are integrated into the national report on public participation in Germany produced in framework of the HarmoniCOP project. The stakeholder analysis will be considered in the case study on the Elbe river basin.

Main Link

Project report: Beteiligung der Öffentlichkeit im Koordinierungsraum Havel

Related Articles

- Public Participation and the European Water Framework Directive (HarmoniCOP)
- Participation of the Public and Water Framework Directive in Bavaria
- Beteiligung der Öffentlichkeit im Koordinierungsraum Havel

Funding

Berlin Centre of Competence for Water (KWB), Germany

Partner

Ecologic Institute, Germany

Team

Wenke Schönfelder

Team

Dr. Nicole Kranz
Dr. Eleftheria Kampa
Antje Vorwerk

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Links

[1] <https://www.ecologic.eu/download/projekte/1950-1999/1984/1984projektbericht.pdf>