

How to ensure long term effects of mitigation? Example from the EU-Life project AGWAPLAN

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The EU- LIFE project AGWAPLAN (Agriculture and Water PLAN) project is an example of how stakeholders (farmers), could be involved in the implementation of the WFD through the selection of measures to reduce diffuse N and P pollution from agriculture to achieve the objectives of the WFD. In other words the aim of AGWAPLAN is to facilitate the practical implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive on farm level as well as on catchment level. A key issue for the project is "cooperation between the agricultural and the environmental sector" in order to get improved results for the environment as well as for the agricultural sector.

The issue "active participation of stakeholders" is emphasized in the Water Frame Directive (WFD). Specifically, Member States "Shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of the Directive, in particular the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans" (Commission of the European Communities, 2000) . Active involvement refers to people actively participating in the planning process by discussing issues and contributing to their solution (Common Implementation Strategy, 2003)

Three pilot areas participate in the project. All areas are farmed intensively, and seen from an environmental point of view they have critical levels of N and P in either surface or groundwater. By using the best available farm and environmental data in an Integrated Advisory System we have created plans for the farmer for how to optimize his production in a way that is consistent with his wishes for farming and consistent with the surrounding environment.

The conclusions:

1. A common professional starting point – and a common understanding of the problems – is a key issue which takes a long time to gain.
2. Data must be precise, relevant and effective if they are to be acted on
3. Structure for cooperation must be anchored in the different organisations
4. Dialogue, cooperation, trust and insight are needed throughout the process.
5. Understanding and accepting the other side's objectives provides a wider ability to act.
6. The easy measures are inexpensive to carry out for the farmers and for society. Which measures are inexpensive vary according to specific conditions on the farms.
7. By securing that the farmers take the goals into consideration in their daily planning a good basis for a long term effect on mitigation is secured.

Challenges:

8. Is the level of knowledge high enough in the EU to be able to work with Integrated Advising at farm and catchment level?
9. Integrated Advising – are the authorities and the farmers ready to invest in this method in order to find targeted methods for the implementation of the WFD?

References:

Commission of the European Communities, 2000. Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy: Joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee 1997/0067(COD) C5-0347/00. Common Implementation Strategy 2003. Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). Guidance Document No.8: Public participation in relation to the Water Framework Directive. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
AGWAPLAN web site: www.agwaplan.dk