



# Legislation

## Public Participation in River Basin Planning

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## 1 Introduction to Public Participation

The protection and enhancement of the environment is the main aim of environmental planning, and it is often emphasised that the use of geographic information and active involvement of the citizens can improve the quality of both the processes and the end decisions. Consequently, the Water Framework Directive, especially the River Basin Management Plans, strongly emphasises collaborative planning and active involvement of the public (Mäkinen 2005).

Public participation has its roots back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where the authorities produced brochures and posters and arranged meetings to really involve the citizens. Until the 1990s public participation continued in the same manner. At that time three important events took place (Hansen & Prospero, 2005). First, there was a growing awareness of the environment and the importance of making the citizens accountable for a sustainable future. The Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Principle 10 (United Nations, 1992a) and Agenda 21 (United Nations, 1992b) both called for increased public participation in environmental decision-making and led to the adoption in Europe of the Aarhus Convention (UN ECE, 1998). This development is further facilitated by the appearance of "symbolic politics" and growing popularity and acceptance of non-governmental organisations like Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund (Castells, 1997). Second, the emergence of the Internet and its rapid expansion to millions of users facilitates the spread of information at a rate unparalleled in history - and it supports bi-directional communication. Although most new media technologies are developed with the fuel of commercially gained income, much of the newest technology will not be designed to promote democracy, but will more likely promote commercially driven activities such as Internet gambling and e-commerce (Castells, 1997). However, if the users want to embrace the Internet as a tool for democracy then it will happen - but only if the users will see positive results from their actions. This requires a pro-active approach from the relevant public authorities. Third, GIS became a mature technology to be used outside the very technical environments, and not least the recent advances in Internet GIS have facilitated the use of GIS in public participation. Many opportunities for public participation are laid down in the environmental legal framework, and Internet GIS can support and facilitate citizen involvement in environmental planning and decision-making.

Naturally, these three events constitute the foundation of public participation in river district planning according to the Water Framework Directive. The Rio Declaration and the Aarhus Convention present the legal and political argument for involving the citizens in river district planning. The Internet revolution facilitates the spread of information to the public and supports bi-directional communication. The maturing GIS technology is a strong equipment for visualising and analysing all kinds of spatial information, e.g. river basin management plans. The following paragraphs firstly give a short description and analysis of important aspects of public participation. Secondly, we present a more detailed description of the expectations regarding public involvement according to the Water Framework Directive and the associated guidelines - CIS Guidance. Thirdly, we will aim to summarise and give some recommendations on how to involve the citizens in river district planning.

## 2 Participatory Planning and the Citizens

Public participation practice is a growing part of decision-making although it remains troublesome in practice. The main purpose of public participation in spatial and environmental planning is to achieve protection, conservation, and wise management of the land resources. This can only be achieved if the proponent properly collects (and acts upon) evidence, opinions and perspectives from all the interested or affected stakeholders, who are to be fully involved in the decision-making process, and from the earliest possible stage. The difficulty lies in the ambiguity of the term and its plethora of variations. Two major questions persist: who are "citizens?" and "how do they participate?"

Arnstein (1969) has provided the most enduring metaphor of variations in Government to Citizen participation. This so-called ladder of public participation has eight rungs divided into three main groups. The lower rungs represent zero opportunity to participate, whereas the uppermost rung representing citizen power involves public-authority partnerships in which citizens are in control, or can veto agency decisions. Abstracting her participation ladder, Arnstein argues that the bottom rungs represent non-participation, the middle rungs tokenism, and the high rungs citizen power (Fig. 1 left). Based on the Arnstein ladder, Weideman and Femers (1993) developed a revised ladder of public participation, where the involvement increases with the level of access to information as well as the citizen's rights in the decision-making process (Fig. 1 middle). According to Weideman and Femers, public involvement increases as the authority grants the citizens rights higher up the ladder, which can only be reached by fulfilling all the requirements of the lower steps on the ladder. Inherent in their conceptualisation lies that simply informing the public is classed as a kind of participation, although access to information and participation are clearly distinct matters.

Considering the current information and communication technologies Smyth (2001) modernised the traditional ladder concepts (Carver, 2001). Climbing up this so-called e-participation ladder enhances the degree of interactivity and participation. The bottom rung of this participation ladder represents online delivery of public services such as payment of rates and taxes. At the upper rungs of the e-participation ladder, the communication becomes bi-directional facilitating a more interactive participation through the sharing of information, proposals and feedback.

Scholars and practitioners worldwide have used the ladder typology to both design and evaluate citizen participation processes. Design and evaluation are clearly two distinct activities; the first is pro-active and normally occurs at the beginning of processes, the latter more critical and contemplative and normally occurs at the end of processes.

Tulloch and Shapiro (2003) explored possible combinations that could exist between the presence and absence of access and participation. This resulted in a simplified comparison of participation and access that allowed a quick categorisation of successful and unsuccessful projects into four types.

1. The first type describes a combination of no or low level of access and no or low level of citizen participation. A good example of this could be the process of locating a military facility where access to information as well as active involvement of the citizens is limited due to security.
2. The second type is characterised with high level of access to information but low level of citizen involvement. The traditional way of doing environmental impact assessments is a good example for this category, where huge amounts of information are supplied to the public, but a real participation of the citizens is not possible because of the complexity of the issue.
3. The third type represents perhaps an unusual situation where the level of public participation is rather high whereas the level of access to information is absent or low.
4. The final category is a combination of a high level of access to information and a high degree of public participation as well. This could be the situation where a group – an NGO or similar - with sufficient expert knowledge retrieves and possibly downloads all available information and makes its own calculations on impact assessments and scenario analysis. Due to the comparatively high level of information and knowledge on both sides, the right foundation for a fruitful active public participation will be present. The taxonomy described by Tulloch and Shapiro (2003) has much more precise definitions and is therefore more suited to categorise various practical implementations of public participation in environmental decision-making than the various ladders of public participation, although it might be difficult in some cases to distinguish between high and low.

	Arnstein	Weideman & Femers	Smyth
Citizen power		Public participation in Final decisions	
		Public participation in assessing risks and recommending solutions	Online decision Support systems
Tokenism		Public participation in Defining interests, actors And determining agenda	Online opinion surveys
		Public participation in assessing risks and recommending solutions	Online discussion
Non-participation		Restricted participation	Communication barrier
		Informing the public	Online service delivery

Achieving a balanced representation of the citizens in the decision making process depends on many factors. However, most agree that those citizens who have a legitimate interest should be included in decision-making, but who this would be for a given process is unclear. Sanoff (2000) states that those who are most affected by a decision should have the greatest voice in the decision. Despite the fact that the general public should be informed about opportunities to participate, the people who have the most at stake should have the greatest level of involvement. Besides this group the participating public should also include those with technical knowledge (Sanoff, 2000) offering assistance in data collection or contributing essential information if the process has technical components

Fig. 1. From Arnstein's ladder to E-participatory environments (Hansen & Proserpi, 2005).

(Sanoff, 2000). This is often the case in spatial planning processes – e.g. in environmental impact assessment. Al-

though the citizens possessing power do not necessarily have a legitimate interest in a particular case they might have the ability to support – or impede – a decision, and therefore they should be considered for involvement.

The identification of potential stakeholders is an essential first step in getting stakeholders to participate. The principles stated above can be reformulated into more operational terms. Creighton (1983) developed a set of ways to identify the affected public by considering the following items:

- Proximity: Citizens living near where a project or plan is implemented are more vulnerable than people living at longer distances from the new project
- Economic: Some citizens may experience financial gain or loss depending on their relationship to the new project
- Use: A new regional plan involving the construction of a motorway may limit some people's use of a resource or facility due to for example to barrier effects.
- Social: A project or policy may threaten a tradition or culture, or it may significantly alter the demographic structure of a community.
- Values: A group may be affected only in terms of how an action relates to its values.

Often the term stakeholder is used when discussing participatory processes. A widely accepted, broad definition of stakeholder is given by Freeman, who considers "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" to be a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder concept emerged in the 1960s where it was suggested that, instead of focusing exclusively on shareholders, a firm also should be responsible to a variety of stakeholders without whose support the organisation would collapse. The expansion of the original concept by Freeman resulted in widening the view of the firm from a strictly economic view to a political view, and nowadays the term is used everywhere when dealing with participatory processes.

## 2.1 ICT-tools in public participation

The open structure and architecture of the Internet provides a rather simple mechanism by which environmental information can be released to the public at relatively low cost for both the provider (the public authority) and the consumer (the citizens). Despite the general spread of information and communication technologies, large parts of the world remain technologically disconnected. This so-called "digital divide" threatens to cut off populations from good jobs and the chance to participate in the affairs of the broader society. Among the Nordic countries the digital divide exists but perhaps less pronounced than in other countries. Thus, gender does not have any significant effect on the use of the Internet, but age has more remarkable effects on the use. For example in Denmark, 68% of citizens aged 16-29 have access to the Internet, whereas the corresponding figure for senior citizens (over 60 years) is 33% (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2002). A similar inequality is related to education. Nordic persons with only primary education have Internet user rates between 44% (Finland) and 50% (Sweden) while academic and advanced professionals have user rates between 69% and 82% (Sweden). One important finding in the report from the Nordic Council of Ministers is that if a person lives in a household with children he or she will be more likely to have access to a computer and the Internet than those living in households without children. Thus, children can be considered as the key to close the digital divide. However, solely relying on Internet based systems for public participation may have the potential to strengthen the voice of younger, male, higher-income people who have

more frequent access to the Internet, and thus carry the risk of overriding the voice of the poor.

A recent case study in Northern Jutland showed that active citizens can be described as: a) male; b) middle age – or above; c) higher education; d) above average income; e) politically active; and f) experienced Internet users (Hansen and Reinau, 2006). Perhaps this is not surprising, but at least the strong male dominance is not appropriate for a modern society. Furthermore, the high level of participation among the more mature people can be criticised – we are planning mainly for the future and therefore the younger generations, but they are nearly absent in the participatory process. The authorities have to reconsider their way of involving the citizens in environmental planning. One obvious solution could be to utilise modern information and communication technology, which generally appeals to the younger generations, but this was actually the main component of the participatory framework in Northern Jutland. Thus, web based discussion forums, interactive 3 D visualisations (Flight Simulator) and a Priority Game were used in the participatory process (Hansen and Kristensen, 2006). When designing the public consultation in relation to the River Basin District Plans these findings must obviously be taken into account.

### 3 Public participation in the WFD

Article 14 of the Directive requires that Member States encourage involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation process. Especially, this concerns the River Basin Management Planning (RBMP). Working plans, consultation measures, timetables, overviews of significant water management issues and draft versions of the management plan have to be published and made available for comments. There should be at least six months to comment on documents and access to background information used for the development of draft versions of River Basin Management Plans.

Annex VII of the Directive provides some additional requirements to RBMP regarding public participation. The response and information received from the public should be summarised within RBMP documents. The summary should contain a description of consultation: measures taken, results of the consultation and how the comments have altered the plan. It does not, however, demand any justification why some of the responses have not been taken into account.

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) – Article 14 - Public information and consultation:

1. Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of this Directive, in particular in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans. Member States shall ensure that, for each river basin district, they publish and make available for comments to the public, including users:
  - a) A time table and work programme for the production of the plan, including a statement of the consultation measures to be taken, at least three years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers;
  - b) An interim overview of the significant water management issues identified in the river basin, at least two years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers;
  - c) Draft copies of the river basin management plan, at least one year before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers.

On request, access shall be given to background documents and information used for the development of the draft river basin management plan.

2. Member States shall allow at least six months to comment in writing on those documents in order to allow active involvement and consultation. Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall apply equally to updated river basin management plans.

The WFD does not set up a detailed procedure how the participatory process should be arranged in Member States. Article 14 describes the public consultation in very general terms and it mainly provides for the rights of the public to have access to information and to comment. However, in the preamble of the Directive it is envisaged that the public involvement in the implementation of the WFD in practice means more than required in Article 14.

Preamble 14: The success of this Directive relies on close cooperation and coherent action at Community, Member State and local level as well as on information, consultation and involvement of the public, including users.

Preamble 46: To ensure the participation of the general public including users of water in the establishment and updating of river basin management plans, it is necessary to provide proper information of planned measures and to report on progress with their implementation with a view to the involvement of the general public before final decisions on the necessary measures are adopted.

The WFD emphasises that successful implementation of the Directive requires close cooperation and coherent actions between Community, Member State and local level as well as information and involvement of the general public and users of the water resources. In Preamble 14, it is emphasised that participation is essential to the overall success of the Directive. Preamble 46 highlights the importance of informing the general public ensuring there are real possibilities to participate. (CIS Guidance 2003 p.10)

#### 3.1 Information and consultation requirements

As mentioned above information supply and consultation is required for

- Timetable and work programme for the production of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)
- An overview of the most important water management issues within River Basin District (RBD)
- A draft copy of (RBMP)

These three documents must be published and made available for comments to the public, including users, who must be given at least six months for written comments. These principles also apply to the planning process concerning updating the River Basin Management Plans. By the end of 2006, at the latest, the public should be informed and consulted regarding the timetable and work programme for production of the management plan and regarding the planned consultation measures. By the end of 2007, at the latest, the public should be informed and consulted regarding the interim overview on the most important water management issues within each River Basin District, which can be formed from one or several independent river basins. By the end of the year 2007, a quite homogenous assessment for all river basins should be done. By the end of 2008, at the latest, the public should be informed and consulted regarding the draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).

By the end of...	Phase of the WFD implementation process	Public involvement: Information and consultation
2003	STEP 1 Framework	
2004	STEP 2 Characterisation and Analysis (Art.4)	
2006	STEP 3 Planning for establishing programmes of measures Outline of River Basin Management Plans Further characterisation of those bodies identified by the gap analysis as being at risk, in order to optimise the monitoring programme and the Programme of Measures. Monitoring programmes start.	
	Timetable and work programme for the production of the River Basin Management Plan	Make available for commenting. Minimum 6 months to comment.
2007	STEP 4 An overview of the most important water management issues within the river basin district	Make available for commenting. Minimum 6 months to comment.
2008	STEP 5 A draft copy of River Basin Management Plan	Make available for commenting. Minimum 6 months to comment.
2009	STEP 6 Final River Basin Management Plan published	
2012	STEP 7 Implementation	
2015	STEP 8 Evaluation and updating, derogations	
2027	STEP 9 Final deadline for achieving objectives, following 2 6-year prolongations	

Tab. I. WFD implementation process and phases where public must be involved (CIS Guidance, 2003).

### 3.2 Evaluation and reporting of the participation

Annex VII of the Water Framework Directive on River Basin Management Plans requires a summary of public information and consultation measures and how they have affected the plan. In addition, contact points and procedures for obtaining the background documentation and information referred to in Art. 14 are required to be mentioned in the River Basin Management Plan.

*Water Framework Directive – Annex VII River Basin Management Plan*

*A. River basin management plans shall cover the following elements:...*

*9. A summary of the public information and consultation measures taken, their results and the changes to the plan made as a consequence;...*

*11. The contact points and procedures for obtaining the background documentation and information referred to in Article 14(1), and in particular details of the control measures adopted in accordance with Article 11(3)(g) and 11(3)(i) and of the actual monitoring data gathered in accordance with Article 8 and Annex V.*

This requirement serves especially as information for the Commission to support it in its duty to supervise the implementation of the Directive. Reporting also brings transparency into the participation process and gives the participants a feedback on how their contribution has been taken into account. It could be said that it is a tool not only for controlling the implementation, but also for involving the public. The report should therefore not be aimed just at the commission but at the participants involved.

CIS Guidance (2003 p.46) emphasises that the report can also be used as a tool to improve participation in the next planning cycle, by using it in an evaluative manner. The purpose of the evaluation in the context of participatory processes is to assess what they have achieved. In an ideal situation both competent authority and participants are involved in evaluation, and the evaluation is taken into account from the very beginning of the process.

### 3.3 The Guidelines - CIS guidance

The EU Member States, Norway and the European Commission have jointly developed a common strategy for supporting the coherent implementation of the WFD. As part of the strategy work, non-legally binding and practical Guidance Documents were developed to help the experts, who are implementing the WFD. One of the Guidance Documents concerns Public Participation (CIS Guidance 2003), which can be understood to present the official, European Commission level understanding of what is meant by public participation in the WFD.

Public participation is often described through questions: why, who, when and how. That is, why people should be involved, who are "the public" or relevant stakeholders in different situations, in what part of the process people should be involved and how the participation should be carried out.

#### 1. Why

The purpose of public participation initially is to improve the decision-making process. The CIS Guidance underlines the following potential benefits: Increasing public awareness of environmental problems; improving the quality of management plans using the knowledge, experience of different stakeholders; public acceptance and commitment to the decision taken; more transparent and more creative decision making; social learning and experience – if participation results in constructive dialogue with all relevant parties involved then the various pub-

lics, government and experts can learn from each other's "water awareness". The CIS guidance also points out the proportionality of the participation, meaning the balance between benefits and costs of arranging the participation. The resources (time, effort and money) used to involve people should be relative to the potential benefits of the participation. This applies to both the authorities and the participants. Both authorities and public should be aware that participation would also demand stakeholders' time and money. Some kind of cost benefit analysis could be carried out to define if involvement is needed and in what extent.

#### 2. Who

When you are planning the participatory process, one of the most important issues is to define the public to be involved in the consultation. The Directive uses the terms "public" (Art. 14), "public, including users" and "general public" and "interested parties", but it does not define those terms. The SEA -Directive (2001/42/EC) for example defines the public as "... one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups" (Article 2 d). This definition of the public can also be applicable to the Water Framework Directive and the terms "public", "general public" and "public, including users" meaning more or less the same. The Guidance uses the term "stakeholder" to refer to the same and defines the term to mean any person, group or organisation, which has an interest or "stake" in an issue. They may be affected by the decisions or outcomes or may have an influence on it. This also includes those who might not (yet) be aware of their influence or what kind of effects decisions might have on them. This is rather similar to identification procedures developed by Creighton (1983) and Freeman (1984) and discussed earlier in this chapter. It is neither possible nor necessary to involve all potential stakeholders in every step of the planning process or in decision-making. To determine which stakeholders are relevant to be involved and in which phase, doing some sort of stakeholder analysis is recommended (see chapter 4.1).

#### 3. When

The public should be involved as early in the planning process as possible, in order to get the maximum benefits from the public involvement, at least, before the crucial decisions are made. By involving the public actively and with the right timing, the authorities can learn and make use of the views, experiences and knowledge of the citizens and obtaining higher acceptance of the decisions to be made. According to the CIS Guidance (2003) it might be too late to reach the real acceptance and engagement of the public if the authorities hesitate to initiate the public consultation. When planning public participation, it is important to divide the process into different stages and define who should be involved and at what stage (when). The timetable, which is linked to the programme cycle of the Water Framework Directive, is a determining factor in timing public participation. The different planning steps provide different possibilities for public participation.

#### 4. How and where

As mentioned above, there are no detailed procedures in the WFD on how the participation should be done. In the end, it is up to the competent authority to decide when and how it will involve the public (and Member State, through national legislation). The following sections describe in more detail how the participation can be organised.

The implementation of the WFD requires that public involvement should be encouraged at all scales where actual activities take place. Scale can refer to various levels, e.g. water body or river basin district, regional level or national level. It should be emphasised that not only the

area where planned action is to take place should be considered, but also areas where the impact of said actions might be felt (CIS Guidance 2003 p.19).

According to Article 14 of the WFD, Member States shall encourage active involvement of the public, implying that the Member States must make clear efforts to facilitate and promote active involvement. There are several ways to involve people actively to the river basin planning process (CIS Guidance 2003 p.26). Following the various ladders of participation, access to information is seen as the basis for all participation – but access to information is not participation in itself. The lowest level of participation is referred to as consultation. The plans and proposals are developed by authorities, after which the public can react to these. The authorities are responsible for the planning process and make the final decisions and are not obliged to take the comments into account. The higher level of participation requires active involvement of the public in the planning process and perhaps even in the decision-making.

Table 2 summarises the implementation phases and provides a short description of main issues for consideration in terms of active involvement. Active involvement of the public is important especially in steps 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. Steps 2 and 3 have already expired. Steps 4 and 5 are stages where the participation is focused on information supply and consultation in accordance with the Art. 14.

### 3.4 Participation and WFD in practice

To get the most benefit from the consultation process, it should be planned well. The issues to be considered are for example when to involve the public, who should organise the consultation, and how should it be done. There are numerous traditions and methods to involve stakeholders in planning processes. The choice of methods and tools for information, consultation and participation depends on the objectives, available resources and the stage of the process. In many respects there seem to be several similarities between the public consultation in the river basin management planning and the public involvement according to the Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.). Following the requirements in this Directive the public authorities within the EU have developed practises for public participation involving a wide audience of stakeholders. The experiences from the environmental impact assessment practises can certainly be used in the public consultation according to the Water Framework Directive. Both Directives are dealing with the delicate balance between environmental interests on the one side and socio-economic interests on the other side.

The consultation process is furthermore facilitated by the emergence of the Internet and the maturing GIS technology as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. The Internet also supports the spread of information to the public as well as the public's feedback to the authorities. The European Commission also emphasises the Internet as a useful tool for public participation in planning projects. The Internet offers a good opportunity to describe and present transposition of the WFD, which is a complex process, in an easy to understand way.

The spatial dimension of river basin planning is obvious and GIS plays an important role in analysing, modelling and visualising various development scenarios for the river basins. The strong dependency of the Water Framework Directive on GIS technology is emphasised by the forthcoming INSPIRE Directive on an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (COM, 2004). For example, WFD Guidelines (CIS Guidance, 2003) presents the Interactive Geographic Information Systems (Web GIS) as a useful tool for associating public comments with positions

or spatial coordinates.

Modern Information and Communication Technology provides several opportunities to create 3D virtual reality representations of the real world. According to Fisher & Unwin (2002) Virtual Reality is the ability of the user of a constructed view a limited digitally encoded information domain to change their view in three dimensions causing an update of the view. The use of Virtual Reality makes it easier to represent spatial information in a way that is more similar to how people observe and perceive them in the real world. Thus the gap between observing and perceiving the real world and a modelled world seems to be reduced by using Virtual Reality, and certainly this could enhance the citizen's role in participatory planning processes. Interaction with a 3D scene could be achieved in several ways. Free-movement through a 3D scene like the popular flight simulators gives the most important benefit of Virtual Reality, but this is generally rather demanding concerning navigation skills. Therefore, some predefined routes will be necessary in a practical planning context. Northern Jutland County have used Internet based 3D visualisation and virtual reality for several years within several planning projects. A recent interview survey showed that about half (46%) of the actively involved citizens in Northern Jutland have tried the 3D visualisation (flight simulator), and 55% of the users of the flight simulator found it a useful tool for their own decision. The most frequent reason for not using the 3D visualisation tools was lack of knowledge about this tool, according to nearly two thirds of the respondents (Hansen & Kristensen, 2006).

An important part of the participatory process is handling of feedback from the public. In every instance of public participation it is important to take into account the public's expectations about the participatory process. People might have high expectations of how their opinions and ideas are used in the planning process. It might end up in disappointment and later could cause frustration and lack of trust in the whole process. This can be avoided by clearly defining the goals of the participation in each level of public participation. Besides, the authority must have set up systems for handling questions and comments before launching the process. There are two main questions to address: how to collect information and how to analyse the comments. However, the Water Framework Directive has no requirements regarding collection or management of comments received from the public. The comments should be well categorised and collected for documentation purposes. Comments should be analysed and all of them should be carefully considered with regards to how they are taken into account in the planning process or why they cannot be taken into account. Giving feedback to the stakeholders and the public, both during and after the process, is another important issue to prepare before launching the process. It can have a major effect on the atmosphere of future public consultations and influence the overall trust to the authorities.

The county administration in Northern Jutland has developed an Internet based communication system for easy addition of comments from the citizens to the County Administration. All comments from the citizens are stored in a public hearing database, facilitating search and query requests, and the information is organised into a report, which can be added to the home page of the County administration. A system like this does not require a specific stakeholder identification procedure; because the system is open to all citizens. Furthermore, the public hearing database keeps track of all comments from the public and thereby assists the authority in giving feedback to the public.

PHASE	PURPOSE	BENEFITS	LEVEL	WHO	HOW
STEP 1 2003	Setting the framework	Not significant, helps to raise awareness of the WFD	National (River Basin District)	As wide a range of stakeholders as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National procedures</li> <li>• Communication plan</li> </ul>
STEP 2 2004	Characterisation and Analysis (Art.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data, information and views of a range of stakeholders;</li> <li>• Identify issues, resolve conflicts and manage expectations.</li> </ul>	National, River Basin District and local levels.	Organisations and individuals who can really contribute to delivering solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral meetings;</li> <li>• Steering groups;</li> <li>• Advisory groups</li> </ul>
STEP 3 2006	Mainly focussed on planning potential measures which may be used to achieve the objectives set for different water bodies	Determine stakeholders' views on the potential options and the final measures. Co-ordination with other water and land use planning may have financial benefits and improve effectiveness of the implementation.	National, River Basin District and local levels.	Other government bodies, water companies, Wastewater treatment companies • Technical experts and 'representatives' of a particular constituency (e.g. NGOs, research community) • Consumers who pay for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral meetings;</li> <li>• Steering groups;</li> <li>• Advisory groups</li> </ul>
STEP 4 2007	An overview of the most important water management issues in RBD	SEE consultation			
STEP 5 2008	Draft copy of River Basin Management Plan	SEE consultation			
STEP 6 2009	Final River Basin Management Plan published. Programmes of Measures shall be established.		National, River Basin District and local levels.	Organisations and individuals who can really contribute to delivering the Programme of Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral meetings;</li> <li>• Steering groups;</li> <li>• Advisory groups</li> <li>• Workshops and meetings to generate solutions and define measures.</li> </ul>
STEP 7 2012	Implementation of Programmes of measures	Active involvement in this step will help to maintain awareness of the measures and contribute to their sustained delivery.	National, River Basin District and local levels.	Other government bodies, water companies, wastewater treatment companies, industry, farmers, etc.) • Technical experts and "representatives" of a particular constituency (e.g. NGOs, academics etc) • Consumers who pay for the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral meetings;</li> <li>• Steering groups;</li> <li>• Consultation methodologies.</li> </ul>
STEP 8 2015	Evaluation and updating, derogations	Active involvement in this step will be useful to raise awareness of the achievement of the objectives and facilitate the understanding of the effectiveness of the Programme of Measures.	National, River Basin District and local levels.	Other government bodies, water companies, wastewater treatment companies, industry, farmers, etc.) • Technical experts and "representatives" of a particular constituency (e.g. NGOs, academics etc) • Consumers who pay for the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral meetings;</li> <li>• Steering groups;</li> <li>• Consultation methodologies.</li> </ul>
STEP 9 2027	Final deadline for achieving objectives, following two 6-year prolongations The involvement continues...	The six-year programme cycle will remain, including public participation as described before.			

Tab. II: Implementation of WFD and active involvement of the public (derived from CIS Document 2003)

Oulujoki was one of the official European pilot river basins, which were used to put the European guidance documents also including guidance for Public participation to the test (CIS Guidance, 2003). The Oulujoki pilot river basin project (2002-2003), organised several public participation events. Two informal meetings were arranged, where feedback was collected by questionnaire to create a basis for real implementation of the WFD (Hynninen & Isid, 2003). General feedback showed that most people were satisfied with general arrangements and clarity of presentations, but availability of material and possibilities to express own opinions were more limited. On the other hand, questions regarding possibilities to involve and inform the public were more alarming, because people were more willing to use passive means to be involved and, for example, common workgroups were neglected.

Public opinion in both meetings showed very clearly that the implementation of the WFD should have a very positive influence on water protection and will promote public participation issues in general. In spite of the relatively sophisticated and modern view of water management, questions relating to amount of work load led to very similar answers in both meetings; work load is going to be much higher in future. These examples of public participation within the Oulujoki PRB exercise show clearly that involving the public in general river basin management is not an easy task. In sparsely populated areas such as the Oulujoki river basin, the number of organisations and especially NGO's are limited and the local population is not very willing to spend a large amount of time on general issues.





