



# Report on Participatory Planning



*provincie* Drenthe



**Hoogheemraadschap van Delfland**

Publisher: Provincie Drenthe. Postbus 122 NL- 8400 AC Assen

Title: Report on Participatory Planning

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Publication: October 2010

## Report on Participatory planning

The central question in this work package is how one can organize his network in such a way that the responsible organisations cooperate well and farmers are stimulated and supported to act as responsible water managers.

In the application the following is mentioned on participatory planning:

WP 3.3 Institutional incl. legal + traditional, governance	3.3.1 Participatory planning to generate options for intervention Supporting public incentives	Ongoing awareness on regional level and local governments and water boards and farmers union. Stakeholders understand and construct the options available and state their preferences for the 'right mix'	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
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This report is based on:

- The SWOTI (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats, International Cooperation) analysis of the networks of the participants of Aquarius. This SWOTI, made with contributions from all the participants, has been reported in the 'Discussion Paper' (Ben van Os & Rienk Schaafsma, June 3th 2010).
- The discussion of this analysis within the working group 'Participatory Planning' on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Delft (Netherlands). Participants: Attachment 1. Statements: Attachment 2.
- The plenary feedback and discussion on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2010. See for the presentation: Attachment 3.

This reports starts with the characteristics of the network, followed by a short review of the discussed methods. The report ends with a summary of opportunities.



# 1. The Network

The network of each region consists of:

- Authorities: National, regional and local.
- Regional Interest Groups.
- Individual Farmers.

## Authorities

The role of authorities in part. planning differs. In some countries (for example Germany and the Netherlands) the regional government (sometimes the water board) play a leading role in connecting farmers with environmental projects.

In other countries the national governmental organisations (sometimes research organisations) play a leading role within the network of authorities.

National or regional funding and legislation is part of the role of the authority in question.

Advantage of a direct involvement of National authorities is the possibility of gaining more policy influence and implementing legislation. When there is no direct involvement of these authorities, regional/local authorities should take good reporting into account.

The role of the EU is mainly restricted to networks, such as that found in Aquarius, and funding. EU programmes play a vital role in spreading knowledge and cooperation.

How authorities work together in part. planning has not been discussed in depth. It seems that in most countries one authority always plays the main role in the network of part. planning.

## Regional Interest Groups

These interest groups consist of farmers' unions/farmer advisory organisations (traditional), farmers working together, on a regional level, in land and water management (relatively new), nature conservation groups, environmental organisations and so on. In some countries (Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden) these groups play a vital role and have a clear added value in the network because of their practical knowledge and bonding with farmers. In some countries (for example UK) there is a strong tradition of individualistic farmers (no local/regional group). In other countries (for example the Netherlands) farmers have started, quite recently, organizing themselves with the main purpose of maintaining (agricultural) nature in water banks. These organised farmers are (also) well motivated participants in sustainable projects about water management.

## Farmers

It depends on the regional setting whether individual (self) organised farmers or farmer advisory services participate or not. Nevertheless there are some common critical aspects that encourage individual farmers to participate:

- Clear and workable water goals of the authorities.
- Authorities that can explain conflicting goals and legislation (good preparation).
- The possibility of long term agreements about maintaining land and water (not to be considered as state aid).
- Options for the farmer to connect the initiative with economic goals (such as a more sustainable agriculture).



- A 'win-win': some measures (such as irrigation, sustainable farming), can be combined better with agriculture than other measures (such as nature conservation). But we see different experiences amongst the regions.
- Trust in farmers as water managers. When farmers are only seen as 'polluters', there is an insufficient base for cooperation.

For authorities it is critical to find the farmer's interest! Therefore understanding, trust and affinity with farming are needed.

For farmers it is critical to understand, and take seriously, the environmental goals (most of the time on a regional, not local scale).

Nevertheless there are some risks involved with working with farmers and farmers' organisations:

- Possibilities of paying farmers for taking measurements rely on European legislation (i.e. state aid and so on).
- Conflicting interests of individuals.
- Losing trust of (individual) farmers due to legislation, time-span, inconsistent policy making over time, etc.
- Limited network to work with (always the same people as representatives).
- Different goals of the various agricultural organisations involved.

## 2. Methods

Participants of the working group agree on the fact that there is not one set of methods in part. planning. Success of a method depends on the local circumstances and traditions. In the working group we discussed some methods to work with farmers and farmer groups by setting up projects on farmers as water managers: working with key persons and with 'kitchen table talks' in particular.

### Key Persons

Part. planning is not only about organisations working together but about individual people as well. When starting up a project where authorities and farmers have to work together, it's often a success when a key person is involved as an intermediate between authorities and farmers/farmers' organisations. Characteristics of such a key person are:

- Can work on a local scale.
- Understanding of governmental issues and affinity with the farmer's practises.
- Good networking and communicating skills.
- Can rely on some trust from farmers/ farmer organisations and of authorities as well.
- Can be 'used' as ambassador on different levels, even within (national) government.

It has been stated that the right key person is sometimes difficult to find. It depends on some luck and coincidence: "the first one is the best one". Skills are often more important than technical knowledge on its own. These people can be found within (institutional) agricultural advisory organisations, private consulting firms, farmers' unions (commercial branch), but also in the network of (retired) policy makers.

### Kitchen table talks

A specific tool in part. planning is the 'kitchen table talks'. This means that authorities, scientists and farmers meet at a local level, for instance at a farmer's kitchen table. Or on a larger scale with a group of farmers in the local town hall. The success of this method depends on aspects such as time of the meeting (end of the day or just after milking the cows), place of the meeting (accessibility), form of invitation (via/coproduction with agricultural organisation), atmosphere of the meeting, etcetera.

### Consulting and negotiation

Other possible methods, such as consulting, negotiation and mediation, are not worked out in the working group.



### 3. Opportunities

At the end of the Aquarius Workshop in Delft the following opportunities were discussed. They are stated below with a brief added explanation.

- Integrate initiatives with concrete agricultural projects and plans.
- Show best cases.
- Think 'global', act local.
- Spreading practices within the levels.
- Talk less, do more!
- Use knowledge of farmers, also internationally.

One good practice is to integrate an initiative of the authorities with an agricultural project (if possible). For this it is important to build and maintain a close relationship with farmers, possibly by key persons or key organisations (intermediate). Clear goals of authorities (with time schedule and some funding) may help to get the attention of the farmers and their projects on sustainable agriculture. When this is the case, opportunities will increase.

There are already best cases within the regions. By spreading the word and explaining to each other, improvements can be made when setting up new initiatives. Not just regarding technical or financial knowledge, but also typical participation issues as stated in this report. Authorities and farmers can play a more active role in spreading knowledge on practices. This can be done together with authorities, scientists and farmers, but also within their own group. For example, international exchanges of farmers help to find new ways for farmers as water managers (exchange of farmer knowledge!). We advise setting up a database of good practices within the Aquarius regions (by using factsheets) and setting up extra international exchanges in cooperation with farmer organisations.

## 4. Conclusions

For participatory planning it's essential to spread knowledge about measures and methods. Within the own organisation/group (for instance farmer organisations) and amongst organisations (authorities, regional interest groups, research). A well maintained database of good practices would help.

Creative networking between organisations and between people is crucial when setting up projects with farmers and, at the same time, when working on conditions 'within' the authorities.

Therefore good skills are very important, especially for the key persons between authorities and farmers. In the end success depends on long term consistency of agreements, goals and legislation. It's important that farmers are able to connect the initiative with their economic goals. Success of part. planning depends therefore on financial and technical possibilities as well.

We suggest discussing the bridge between these results and the results of the financial working group during the next workshop (Norway).



## **Attachment 1 Participants of discussion working group**

Delft, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2010

Kirsty Blackstock (UK)  
Rainer Behrens (DE)  
Anne Mette Sorensen Langvad (DK)  
Flemming Gertz (DK)  
Kirsten Broch (DK)  
Troels Praest Andersen (DK)  
Deirdre Buist (NL)  
Diederik Roggeveen (NL)  
Anja Dijkstra (NL)  
Miriam Klazenga (NL)  
Egil Holmsen (NO)  
John Strand (UK)  
Gert Erlandsson (SE)  
Ben van Os (NL) chair  
Rienk Schaafsma (NL) facilitator

## Attachment 2 Discussion statements June 10th



### Workshop Participatory planning

Discussion June 10th 2010

Ben van Os & Rienk Schaafsma



1

Direct European influence in the network is only possible by Interreg projects.



2

National Authorities can (only) bring in extra support in projects when there are possibilities of funding and legislation.



3

Regional Interest Groups have a clear added value in the network because of their knowledge and bonding with farmers and/or nature conservation.



4

What are the pros and contras of the 'Kitchen table talks'?



5

Key persons play a crucial role in 'connecting' authorities and farmers.



6

Do we agree with the conclusion that all partners stated that the good network was their strength?



7

Gaining and keeping trust from farmers, explaining conflicting interests and involving all necessary knowledge are a necessity in tackling these weaknesses.



8

Teasing farmers towards participating is only possible when initiators connect the initiative with concrete agricultural projects and plans.

Authorities must have, or arrange also some understanding about farming.



9

To gain trust of farmers, authorities must be very clear and concrete in their goals and legislation.

Also when things are not clear yet (open).



10

International cooperation seems to improve knowledge and innovation, extend also the network for farmers, and raises sometimes higher prestige in the area.



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## Attachment 3 Presentation June 11th



### Workshop Participatory planning

Discussion June 10th 2010

Ben van Os & Rienk Schaafsma



### Network of authorities

- ▶ Framework directive forces towards more investigations
- ▶ EU projects: spreading knowledge
- ▶ Authorities working together



### National

- ▶ Direct involvement of National Authorities gives more policy influence
- ▶ If no direct involvement: take a good reporting into account



### Interest groups

- ▶ Have a clear added value in the network because of knowledge and bonding with farmers and/or nature conservation
- ▶ Some countries: individualistic farmers (trad.)
- ▶ Self organising farmers: advantage (some countries): motivated!
- ▶ Find their interest!



### Key persons

- ▶ Try to find the good one!
- ▶ The first one is the best one
- ▶ (Can) work at local scale
- ▶ Use as ambassadors on different levels



### Threats and Trust

Work on gaining and keeping trust from farmers:

- explaining conflicting interests
- involving all necessary knowledge
- be clear, honest and open about goals
- even if you don't know!
- work on long term agreements
- farmers can maintain!

## Opportunities



- ▶ Integrate initiative with concrete agricultural projects and plans
- ▶ Show best cases
- ▶ Think 'global', act local
- ▶ Spreading practices within the levels
- ▶ Talk less, do more!
- ▶ Use knowledge of farmers, also international





