Stakeholder Participation in AquaMoney

Evaluation of Stakeholder Participation in the DG RTD Project AquaMoney (SSPI-022723)

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Summary

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) unifies a number of existing water related directives. Furthermore, it introduces a river basin approach to water quality and quantity protection, in contrast to past approaches driven by administrative boundaries. Other key elements are the introduction of economic principles, methods and instruments and the fostering of public participation. Since all these features are new to national policy makers, the European Commission has set up a Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) in order to facilitate the implementation of the WFD. Specialised working groups were set up for i.a. public participation and the various economic elements of water resources management. Although these groups provided guidance on both elements, the particular issue of the valuation of environmental and resource costs and benefits (ERCB) was still only covered in a very general way. Thus, the Commission has initiated a policy maker oriented research project, aimed at generating a reliable and easy-to-use guidance on the economic valuation of ERCB: AquaMoney.

The AquaMoney project has a number of participative elements:

- the initial Policy Maker Demand survey – the PMD was conducted in order to assess the guidance needs of national policy makers;
- the Advisory Committee – a counselling board constituted of WFD and environmental policy experts from the European Commission, consultancies, NGOs and national governments;
- the ongoing Case Studies, which have two participatory elements – pre-testing the guidance in 11 national and international river basin districts in close collaboration with local stakeholders, but also the valuation studies themselves;
- the public Website and further dissemination activities – addressing primarily an academic audience but also the broader public and providing extensive information on the project.

Obviously stakeholder participation follows different patterns for the various participative elements mentioned above. Some essential characteristics of participatory processes:

- transparency of the participation process itself is the underlying guiding theme for all stakeholder participation processes;
- degree of participative involvement – which can range from a purely one-way information to a fully integrated co-operation or even a self-determination of stakeholders;
- openness of process – depicting the flexibility of process structures to adapt to stakeholder suggestions or other input.

All case study team leaders have so far introduced participatory elements in their case studies. Although the possibilities and conditions for participation differ among the case studies, there is a clearly visible trend: First of all, the most relevant stakeholders are national, regional and other government representatives. The actual stakeholders are most often selected based upon prior experience with WFD, reputation of the institution, and personal acquaintance. The most frequent stakeholder group size is between 5 and 7, while the preferred frequency of stakeholder interaction lies between 2 and 5 meetings. The actual form and shape of participation depends on the specific conditions in each case study. Consequently, some case studies employ stakeholders in more layers than others.

Aside from the inclusion of stakeholders in the case study process, each valuation study based on stated preferences bears characteristics similar to an opinion poll: A representative sample of the concerned population is questioned on various aspects regarding the valuation of local water resources. The feedback is hence much more than just the resulting value function, but delivers socio-economic and political information ranging from valuation of the environment in general to the current perception of the ecosystem's qualities, which can actually stray far from the scientific evidence, as some case studies had to experience. In that regard, the AquaMoney project is also a condensed Europe-wide opinion poll on water quality and scarcity perception, fears and priorities.

Stakeholder participation in the policy maker demand survey has been analysed as well. The number of respondents differed widely between younger and older Member States. Two very contrasting procedures emerged: on the one hand

the single group answer filled out by a set of high-ranking experts and on the other hand up to 8 differing answers from individual interviewees.

The Advisory Committee (AC) shows a mixed performance. The AC can contribute comments to high-level decisions and receives available information early on in the process, giving it a fairly wide participatory influence. Nevertheless, the low frequency of the meetings somewhat reduces the participatory potential.

The current basic setting of the website is seen as sufficient to fulfil its role at present as the number of visits indicate. Nevertheless, it may be advisable to update the site more frequently as the project enters the next phase and as more results will be available. Another option to improve stakeholder participation through the website would be to introduce a possibility to give feedback via e-mail.

As the research project is still under way, there is a good reason to believe that participation will be further improved over time. These findings are even more remarkable since AquaMoney is a research project and in the case of the case studies there was no extra budget allocated for the a stakeholder consultation. Besides all the analysed formal participative elements, AquaMoney offers an informal field of participation, the so-called communities-of-practice.

As the WFD includes mandatory participation, it is only straightforward to have high expectations in terms of participation when it comes to WFD-related research projects.

1. Introduction

This Evaluation of Stakeholder Participation in the AquaMoney research project assesses the implementation of participatory elements within the different phases and modules of the AquaMoney project. The aim of the AquaMoney project is to give experts and policy makers more guidance on the economic valuation of the environmental and resource costs and benefits related to water resources management as required under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Additionally, the underlying Directive calls explicitly for direct stakeholder participation. It follows that stakeholder participation is an essential constituent of the research project. Nevertheless, one shall bear in mind, that stakeholder participation does not represent a goal in itself. Participation in the context of research projects has multiple dimensions and can support the research process with substantial input. Additionally, participatory elements may help the project team to find better strategies and place their findings in the right context. Still, expectations should not be too high either: a research project is not an entirely participatory process. Still, succeeding in the field of stakeholder participation can support the overall success of AquaMoney. The current benchmarking exercise allows the evaluation of the current state of stakeholder participation within the project and its different subdivisions. This objective is addressed by analysing the different areas of stakeholder participation within AquaMoney.

After giving a brief description of the Water Framework Directive and the AquaMoney research project, with an emphasis on of stakeholder participation, different aspects of stakeholder participation will be presented. These aspects are translated into criteria and will then be applied to the different areas of stakeholder interaction within AquaMoney, leading finally to an overview of the participation process' current state.

Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (Directive 2000/60/EC) represents a major piece of EU environmental regulation. After several years of negotiations, the Directive entered into force in 2000. It provides a regulatory framework for all water policies in Europe, and integrates several existing pieces of EC regulation, such as the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the Groundwater Directive (80/68/EEC) or Urban Waste Water Directive (91/271/EEC).
The directive aims at:

- Preventing further deterioration of, protecting and enhancing the status of water resources;
- Promoting sustainable water use based on long-term protection of water resources;
- Enhancing protection and improvement of the aquatic environment through specific measures for the progressive reduction of discharges, emissions and losses of priority substances and the cessation or phasing-out of discharges, emissions and losses of the priority hazardous substances;
- Ensuring the progressive reduction of pollution of groundwater and preventing its further pollution;
- Contributing to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.

Overall, the Directive's target is good water status for all water bodies in Europe by 2015. Adopted in 2000, first stage until 2004: start river basin management plan, 2008 draft river basin management plan, 2012 measures operational, 2015 meet objectives, 2021 first management cycle ends, 2027 second cycle ends, final deadline for objectives.

The Water Framework Directive introduced several innovations into European water management, such as an integrated approach to water policy and management (integrating surface- and groundwater, inland as well as coastal waters etc.), the organisation of water policies in river basins rather than along administrative boundaries, and the role of economic principles, methods and instruments to achieve the Directive's objectives were applied to water management. Another element is the central role for stakeholder participation (see preamble, Art 4.7.c, Art 9.2, Art 14, annex III) in the implementation process. Arguably, the WFD has been the first major environmental Directive in Europe that explicitly encompasses both economic and participatory approaches. The little experience in either of the two fields explains the additional attention they receive: obviously, both economic considerations and stakeholder concerns also played a role in pre-WFD water policies. However, the novelty is that these elements are now integrated systematically throughout the decision making process, and are applicable across river basins all over Europe. Therefore methods and tools are new to policy makers and implementing authorities alike, and often theoretically devised methods need to be adapted for the practical implementation in the field. This creates a need for methodological developments, assistance and guidance in both fields.

2. Stakeholder participation in the Water Framework Directive

This report addresses stakeholder participation in the AquaMoney research project. The AquaMoney project has been commissioned by the EU Commission's DG Research under the 6th framework programme to produce guidance for the assessment of environmental and resource costs and benefits in the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
Stakeholder participation is an essential element of the WFD, and one of the innovations which the WFD aims to introduce into water management policies in Europe. There are several reasons why the participatory approach of the WFD would also be of relevance for a research project such as AquaMoney:

- Ensuring the relevance of research and embedding of research findings in the implementation process: involving stakeholders in the research design and implementation is expected to increase the policy relevance of the research. Through this process, researchers gain a better understanding of the information needs from stakeholders (including policy makers in a wider sense but also affected economic actors and their representatives, civil society etc.). At the same time, decision makers also get a better understanding of the chances and opportunities that research results can provide in support of policy making, as well as the limitations and uncertainties associated with such results.
- Ensuring coherence between research and the wider policy context: As the WFD is the wider policy context in which the AquaMoney project operates, it is clear that the WFD objective of involving stakeholders should also apply to the research efforts that support the implementation process. Of course, the participatory requirements formulated for the Directive itself and the corresponding participatory processes are not immediately applicable to a research project such as AquaMoney.

In order to decide on which elements are valid for AquaMoney, we will need to first examine the broader issue of participation in the WFD.

2.1 Stakeholder participation requirements within the WFD

Stakeholder participation is considered - besides the introduction of economic instruments - as one of the major innovations of the WFD, in line with the international trend towards integrated water resource management. European policy makers expect that stakeholder participation has the potential to increase water management policies' efficiency and to allow a higher responsiveness to stakeholders needs.
Stakeholders in this context are defined as all those who are at the same time affected by the WFD and are actively voicing their demands.

2.1.1 Definition and Political Context

Stakeholder participation can generally be defined as allowing stakeholders, i.e. actors who are affected by the programme or measure and who are willing to express their opinion, to influence the outcome of plans and working processes (WG2.9 2003). Although the WFD itself does not define the terms "public" and "public participation", art. 2(d) of the SEIA Directive (2001/42/EC) specifies public as "One or more natural or legal persons, and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups". Similarly, the Århus Convention uses the same notion of public. The Århus Convention stresses that public or stakeholder participation should involve:

- that the "public concerned" (here "stakehoders") be informed timely and effectively;
- appropriate time frames for participation;
- low transaction costs for information gathering;
- decision-makers taking into account results from the participation process;
- the decision being made public timely and completely documented.

The term "stakeholder" usually refers to the part of the population that is affected by the plan, programme or measure, i.e. has a "stake" in it. In the context of the present benchmark, participation will refer to stakeholder participation to stress the aspect of being affected and interested in the issue. Core elements of stakeholder participation are both that

the affected public is involved in the decision-making process and that this involvement is lateron reflected in the decision itself. That is, participation shall not be used as a fig leaf for top-down decision-making.

In the recent past, the use of participatory elements has been increasingly fostered in all areas of public intervention and decision making. The reasons can be grouped in motives directly linked to the decision makers' (direct) utility and more altruistic motives generating only indirect utility:

- direct utility:
  - encourage acceptance instead of rejection of the project (increase legitimacy)
  - as a means to improve decision making itself
  - improve the quality of the implementation and reduce delays
  - more transparent and creative decision making process
  - take advantage of experience and knowledge of stakeholders
- indirect utility:
  - promote active citizenship and reduce democracy fatigue
  - encourage social learning processes (learn about each other's water awareness)
  - increase public awareness of environmental issues

The reasons for the emergence of participation, with a special emphasis on planning and environmental regulation, are diverse. Explanations range from a compensation for lower voting participation rates in elections (Schulze-Wolf 2006) to more revisable motives such as improved effectiveness and legitimacy (Newig 2007). Newig points out that all motives can be regrouped according to either improving effectiveness or fostering in legitimacy. That is most of the motives formerly labelled as altruistic are in his model legitimacy-oriented while most of the motives labelled as having a direct utility are named effectiveness-oriented.
More specifically, he isolates the following rationales:

- legitimacy
  - transparency of decision-making and control of state policy and governmental decision-makers
  - pursuit of legitimate self-interests on the part of the stakeholders
  - strengthening democracy
- effectiveness
  - improve environmental quality, reach environmental goals
  - quality of decision
  - quality of implementation

The underlying axiom is that public or stakeholder participation is an improvement of the political process and results in net utility gains for society.
Until now there has been very little research on the overall impact of stakeholder participation. Newig is currently establishing an assessment matrix for the evaluation of stakeholder participation in environmental issues (Newig 2007), (Newig and Fritsch 2007). So far he has found evidence that stakeholder participation can indeed lower the level of environmental standards, but on the other hand improves the implementation vastly: In his study on agricultural nitrate pollution in Lower Saxony, Newig (Newig 2007) found that the participation of farmers caused lower environmental standards than without participation but increased the acceptance of the newly set emissions standards among farmers. Thus, the net outcome for the environment was still positive, i.e. better than without participation..Which effect dominates depends on the specific conditions of the issue at hand. In the case of agricultural nitrate pollution in Lower Saxony, Newig found an overall positive effect (Newig 2007), but in his preliminary assessment of 47 case studies he presents both cases with net positive and negative outcomes (Newig and Fritsch 2007).
For the time being, even though there is no clear evidence of a general net negative impact of participation on environmental issues, the need for a thoroughgoing investigation – exceeding by far the limitations of this benchmark – of the net impact of participation is still evident.
One conclusion can already be drawn: a higher level of participation does not necessarily always increase the overall effectiveness of a project. There exists a certain optimal level of stakeholder participation which will be discussed further in section 3.2. That is, there can be too much participation in a process, reducing the total expected output. However, it has to be bourne in mind that participation is most of all a process and thus, no blue-prints for an optimal participation are available: best choices are always depending on context and issues at hand.

2.1.2 Wider Legal Context

Whether or not stakeholder participation is seen as an integral part of the political process depends largely on the political culture in a country, including the administrative structures and the self-conception of public servants. Stakeholder participation is not always self-motivated, but is also often implemented as it is legally required. These legal requirements themselves can be seen as expressions of a general political will, but can sometimes also be in contradiction with the decision maker's preferences in a specific situation.
The Århus Convention for example establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment.

– Firstly, the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities ("access to environmental information"). This can include information about the state of the environment, but also policies or measures taken, or the state of human health and safety where this is affected by the state of the environment. Applicants are entitled to obtain this information within one month upon request and without having to say why they require it. In addition, public authorities are obliged, under the Convention, to actively disseminate environmental information in their possession;
– Secondly, the right to participate in environmental decision-making. Arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable the public affected and environmental non-governmental organisations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programmes relating to the environment, these comments to be taken into due account in decision-making, and information to be provided on the final decisions and the reasons for it ("public participation in environmental decision-making");
– Finally, the right to review procedures to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general ("access to justice").

Newig (Newig 2007) analyses that the preamble to the Århus Convention lists all the above mentioned rationales of legitimacy and effectiveness (see 2.1.1).

- Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment and amending with regard to public participation and access to justice Council Directives 85/337/EEC and 96/61/EC. The Participation Directive constitutes one of the two pillars of the Århus Convention, the other being the Directive on Public Access to Information, both established in 2003. The directive gives specific rights regarding the second fundamental right - public participation – given in the Århus Convention.

Regarding the Public Participation Directive, Newig point out that it stresses far less the rationales of legitimacy and focuses instead primarily on issues of effectiveness.

2.2 Applicable Guidelines for Stakeholder Involvement

The implementation of the Water Framework Directive raises a number of shared technical challenges for the Member States, the Commission, the Candidate and EEA Countries as well as stakeholders and NGOs. In addition, many of the European river basins are international, crossing administrative and territorial borders and therefore a common understanding and approach is crucial to the successful and effective implementation of the Directive.
In order to address the challenges in a co-operative and co-ordinated way, the Member States, Norway and the Commission agreed on a Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the Water Framework Directive only five months after its adoption.
To further specify the participatory requirements of the WFD and to assist Member States in implementing them, a considerable amount of guidance has been produced over the last years. The available sources for guidance on stakeholder involvement in the directive can be grouped in official and informal documents.

2.2.1 Official Guidance Documents

- CIS WG 2.9 Public Participation, (WG2.9 2003)

In the course of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS), the EU WG 2.9 established in 2002 a guidance on public participation, reflecting the opinions of all Member States. The publications of all the CIS working groups serve as the standard reference for the implementation of the WFD and are widely accepted by policy makers throughout the Union[1]. The document recommends: active involvement, consultation, and public access to information at all levels. Here, active involvement encompasses first of all the participation in the development and implementation of plans, as well as shared decision-making and finally even self-determination. The guidance assumes that participation in the development and implementation of plans is considered an essential part, whereas the latter two elements are not always required. Thus, public participation under the WDF does not always include all levels of participation.

- CIS WG Water and Economics (WATECO), (WATECO 2004)

This first guidance on implementation, produced as guidance document No. 1 in 2004 by CIS working group 2.6, focuses on economic elements and their implementation. Although primarily not concerned with participation, the study points out that the integration of stakeholders into the economic analysis can bring substantial benefits by including their expertise as well as by increasing the acceptance later on of the outcome of the economic analysis. Additionally, the group emphasises the need for transparency in general, but also with regard to the stakeholders in order to allow fast and easy updating and foster acceptance.

2.2.2 Informal European Guidance and National Guidance Documents

Almost every Member State complements the CIS findings by its own national efforts to give the mostly local and regional implementing authorities guidance for the process. Examples are:

- The United Kingdom Technical Advisory Group (WFD UK TAG) provides extensive guidance materials on all aspects of the WFD[2], thus enabling local authorities in charge of implementation to better comply with European requirements.
- Länderarbeitsgemeinschaft Wasser (LAWA) (Working Group of the Federal States on Water Problems) offers various guidance documents, especially the "German Guidance Document for the implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive" which is continuously updated.(LAWA 2002)

Under the European Union's framework 5th Programme for Research and Development, and under the European Commission's programme on Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development, the most widely known research project is:

- HarmoniCOP, (Ridder et al. 2005)

As the result of a 2005 European research project, the guidance on "Harmonising Collaborative Planning", gives advice on the implementation of public participation as required under the WFD. As this study is not the result of a European working group, its results are far less generally accepted and tend to include a very high-level of participation. Nevertheless it provides the most up-to-date and complete advice on participation in the context of the WFD. The recommendations in the HarmoniCOP handbook can be understood as an upper ceiling for public participation under the WFD.

[1] *http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library*
[2] *http://www.wfduk.org/tag_guidance*

3. Stakeholder Participation in the AquaMoney Project

3.1 AquaMoney project description[3]

The AquaMoney project develops and examines practical guidelines for the assessment of environmental and resource costs and benefits (ERCB) in the European Water Framework Directive (WFD). The concept of environmental and resource costs plays a central role in the economic analysis of the WFD, in particular for the cost recovery of water services (Article 9 WFD) and for the decision on exemptions on the grounds of disproportionate costs (Article 4 WFD). However, despite the centrality of environmental and resource costs and benefits to the directive, there are no methodological guidelines regarding their practical assessment and inclusion within economic analyses of the WFD. The project brings together 16 institutions from different parts of Europe, covering environmental economics as well as water management.

The AquaMoney project team aims at:

- Assessing policy maker demand for information on ERCB, related to the implementation of the WFD;
- Developing practice-oriented guidelines on how to assess ERCB in a quick and reliable way, with particular focus on the transfer of values between different sites;
- Testing these guidelines by carrying out economic valuation case studies in 10 different European river basins;
- Analysing the experiences made and providing recommendations for decision makers.

The experiences gained in the case studies will thus be used to refine the guidance document. The common design of the case studies will also permit investigation of techniques for transferring economic values of environmental and resource costs and benefits from water body level to national and international river basin level and vice versa. Part of this exercise will be to investigate the potential for using geographical information systems (GIS) to synthesise data from the case studies with available physical environment and census data so as to generate maps of expected benefits of improved water quality due to WFD implementation.

Although recent decades have witnessed an expansion of methods for assessing environmental costs and benefits, to date little progress has been made in converting these theoretical and methodological advancements into practical guidance readily applicable for policy purposes. If left unaddressed, this failing is likely to severely hamper the desired implementation of the WFD across Europe. The main objective of this project is to develop and test such practical and policy relevant guidelines. This will be achieved through the development of standard procedures and a protocol for good practice in decision appraisal for the WFD. These guidelines will then be tested via a series of case studies of selected, representative European river basins. Outcomes of these case studies will then be used in two ways. First, this information will be used to refine the guidelines for good practice in WFD decision appraisal. Second, the common design of case studies will permit investigation of techniques for transferring economic values of environmental and resource costs and benefits from water body level to national and international river basin level and vice versa. As part of this exercise we will also investigate the use of geographical information systems (GIS) to synthesise data from the case studies with available physical environment and census data so as to generate a Europe-wide map of expected benefits of improved water quality due to WFD implementation. Here the intention is to reduce the need to conduct further original valuation studies, thereby reducing the time and resource costs associated with WFD decision-making.

The project has been designed to provide policy-relevant output, achieved i.a. through the direct involvement of an Advisory Committee that convenes policy-makers and other stakeholders from all over Europe that are directly involved in the implementation of the WFD. The involvement and participation of policy makers and stakeholders will be employed to define user demand for information about environmental and resource costs and benefits of WFD implementation across European river basins. Policy maker input is furthermore consolidated in the project by the inclusion of river basin authorities in the pilot case studies. This demand will be translated into specific criteria and recommendations for the development of practical guidelines for the economic valuation of environmental and resource costs and benefits in the context of the implementation of the WFD.

[3] *Tthe information contained in this section is based on the Description of Work and the first AquaMoney policy brief (see http://www.aquamoney.ecologic-events.de/sites/download/aquamoney_policy_brief.pdf).*

3.2 Stakeholder Participation in a Research Project

Obviously, stakeholder participation in a research project such as AquaMoney has a different function, and will take on a different form, than stakeholder participation in the WFD implementation itself. One key difference concerns the crucial question of who is considered as a stakeholder, and what their role should be. In the AquaMoney project, decision-makers working in implementing authorities are both considered to be stakeholders and at the same time beneficiaries / users of the project outcome, i.e. the guidance to be delivered. In standard participatory situations however, beneficiaries and stakeholders are generally two different sets of actors and are at least partly in conflict over the outcome of the project in question. In the context of research participation, the situation may be different: the potential for conflict between the project initiator and the stakeholders is usually lower than in a standard situation. In the case of the present project, the sets of stakeholders, decision-makers and beneficiairies overlap and mix.

Participation is an integral feature of the AquaMoney project. The stated objective of the project to produce policy-relevant output cannot succeed without proper interaction with the users of the project results. Nevertheless, there are some qualifications to this: the project is funded by European Commission's DG Research, and has been set up as a "policy-oriented research project." The objectives are therefore not to satisfy policy-makers demand for simple and practical tools, but to extend and develop the underlying scientific foundations. Thus, the project objectives and approach are stakeholder-oriented, but not entirely determined by the needs of stakeholders.

Baranek et al. (2005) examine the role and specific characteristics of participation in research. Potential functions that participation can have in research are:

- classical approach: integration of practical experience and knowledge into the research project, i.e. "research cum participation". This covers the collection of information and gathering of knowledge for problem solving purposes.
- extended approach: participation as the object of the research or purpose of the research, i.e. "participation in research". A democracy-theory inspired reflection of research and its role in society.

Baranek et al. clearly state the limitations for participation within research projects: it can never replace expert ruling and by no means eliminate all areas of conflict. Still, potential exists to initiate a dialogue between stakeholders, to crosslink between stakeholders and improve the transfer and implementation of knowledge and ideas. Baranek et al. conclude that the main driving force for effective participation in research is the original outline of the project: task and scope of the research project determine largely the project design and consequently the degree of possible participation. Here arises the risk of intellectual overload if too much participation is expected from a project unable to bear such an extended approach.

Thus, while stakeholder participation in a research project is less likely prone to conflict, it should not be underestimated either. Producing policy-relevant research results involves an element of tension, as the underlying incentive structures for academia and policy making are different. Thus, policy relevance and scientific originality are two different objectives for conducting research, which are not always compatible, and may even conflict at times.

Participation within the AquaMoney project can serve as an example of both the merits and the difficulties of participation in resreach projects. More thorough research will be needed in order to advance the knowledge about possibilities for and limits of participation in research.

3.3 Areas of Stakeholder Participation within AquaMoney

The following section discusses some of the channels through which stakeholders are already involved in the AquaMoney project. Each tool will be evaluated with regard to its degree of involvement.

We will define six dimensions of participation (according to (Videira 2006)):

- no participation – stakeholders are not involved at all;
- information – stakeholders receive information, but can not comment on it or give any other feedback;
- consultation – stakeholders can give feedback after being informed;
- involvement – stakeholders and project team communicate directly and permanently beyond consultation;
- co-operation – project team and stakeholders partner in all aspects of the project including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution;
- self-administration – project design and execution are laid in the hands of stakeholders

The degree of participation can be set according to the specific needs of each task and adjusted over time. Most of the information used in this report stems from official project communications. Additional information on the state of participation was acquired through a questionnaire (see 5).

3.3.1 Economic Valuation

The central objective of the AquaMoney project is to produce practical, road-tested and tailor-made guidance for economic valuation of water resources in the context of the Water Framework Directive. It can be argued that the process of assessing the economic value by eliciting people's willingness to pay for environmental improvements is in itself a participatory tool. Most environmental goods and services take the form of non-market impacts, e.g. increasing the amenity value of a natural area and thereby adding to the quality of life. Since such effects are not traded in a market place, there is no market price that could be used as a proxy for their value. Instead, the economic value needs to be derived through non-market valuation methods. These methods can be grouped into revealed-preference (or indirect) valuation methods, where individuals' valuation of a good is derived from their observed market behaviour and stated-preference (or direct) valuation methods, where individuals' valuation of a good is elicited through survey methods. The latter category comprises contingent valuation (CV), discrete choice experiments (CE) and contingent ranking (CR) techniques. In both cases, the value of a good or service is measured through the willingness-to-pay for an environmental improvement or the preservation of the status quo, or the willingness-to-accept compensation for a degradation of the status quo. These valuation methods include elements of public or stakeholder participation, in that they measure individual preferences for a proposed course of action. In stated-preference approaches, respondents are asked to give their personal vote and value for the environmental improvement at hand. In this sense, economic valuation can be considered as a tool to elicit public preferences in the way that an opinion poll would, but in addition to that it also provides a measure of the strength of public preferences and expresses this in monetary terms through financial commitment. At the same time, the related survey work can be regarded as a low-intensity form of participation: respondents are presented with a pre-defined set of questions / choices.

Public participation is referring to the influence of the affected public on the decision making process. In the case of environmental valuation, the link between participatory input and decision-making is relatively weak. On the other hand, if the sample is representative, the outcome is regarded by some as a good way to inform democratic decision-making procedures. However, it is debatable whether the democratic nature underlying this mechanism is understood by all respondents. Thus, the use of economic environmental valuation as a participatory measure comes with some strings attached. Despite these limitations and drawbacks, there are also some aspects where economic valuation methods can make a useful contribution to public participation processes, and vice versa. For example, one crucial step that precedes the actual valuation exercise is to establish which people (or which groups of users) actually use a water body, and in which way they would benefit from an improvement in its status. Such information is obviously also relevant when it comes to organising public participation processes.

As the economic valuation is carried out within the case studies, more detailed information on the actual participatory relevance of the valuation itself can be found under 3.3.4 (case studies).

3.3.2 Policy Maker Demand Survey

In order to assess the need for economic information in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, and the ensuing demand for guidance on these issues, a survey among policy makers was carried out in the first half of 2007. Questionnaires were sent out to stakeholders, mostly identified by the co-ordinators of the AquaMoney case studies. In several cases, these questionnaires were supported by face-to-face interviews. A total of 41 responses were received from 15 Member States. The findings of the survey will be used to shape the development of the AquaMoney guidance material. All relevant stakeholders of the AquaMoeny project were addressed, but with a clear emphasis on regional government, see Figure 1.

Given the above-mentioned characteristics, the assessment of the policy maker demand constitutes an element of participation, in this case by the policy makers themselves as the future users of the guidance and as stakeholders in the AquaMoney Project. Policy makers expect thoroughgoing and practical guidance on the ERCB assessment.

The main objectives of Work Package 1[4] (PMD) are to:

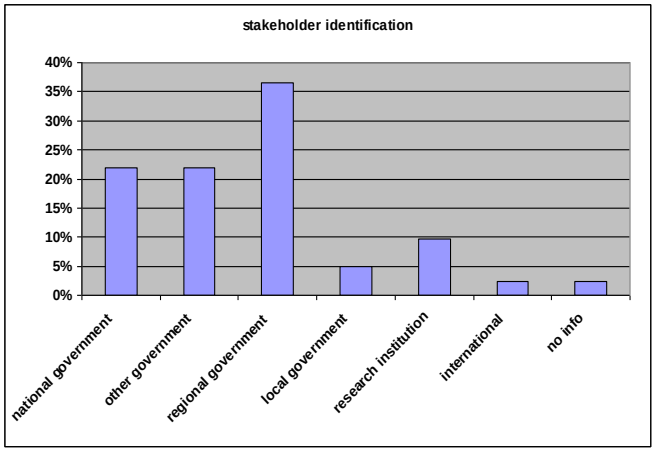

Figure 1 – Composition of stakeholder involvement in PMD sruvey (n=41)

- Re-define the concept and role of environmental and resource costs and benefits in the WFD based on the international environmental economics literature, the definitions provided in WATECO and the Drafting Group ECO2 under Working Group 2B of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS).
- Provide an overview of how environmental and resource costs are currently dealt with across Europe in the first river basin characterisations according to Article 5, the assessment of cost recovery according to Art.9 or the formulation of environmental objectives and the definition of disproportionate costs according to Art. 4, and which possible links exist to the selection of a cost-effective programme of measures in Art.11.
- Identify policy maker demand for economic information in the assessment procedures for environmental and resource costs and benefits in the context of the WFD.
- Develop a list of criteria specifying policy maker demand for economic information related to the economic valuation of environmental and resource costs and benefits based on practical experiences with the implementation of the WFD so far.
- Conduct a 'gap analysis', confronting policy maker demand for information with currently available data and information.
- Integrate policy maker demand for information into other Work Packages by fine-tuning the scope and focus of the project to the demands of policy makers and the wider stakeholder community.

The work carried out in WP1 has not been undertaken before. Existing work is mainly general and conceptual in nature and therefore unsuitable for practical application. The work in WP1 goes beyond currently available generic information about environmental and resource costs and benefits and is an essential first step in order to be able to come up with practical and policy relevant guidelines.

Stakeholder involvement in surveys is mostly limited to consultation. Giving respondents room to comment on the issue at hand can increase the meaning of the survey. However giving each respondent a feedback or allowing stakeholders to actually design and develop the survey would only be possible in direct interviews. As the PMD survey has been carried out in the form of a questionnaire, there is no viable option to include further participation beyond consultation.

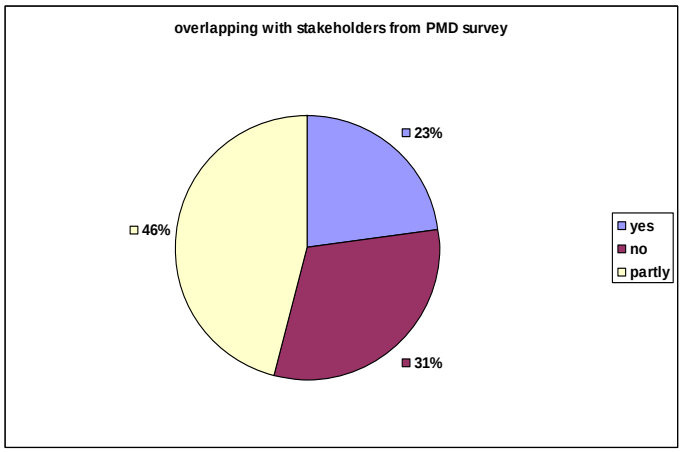

Figure 2 – Same stakeholders in PMD and case studies? (n=13)

Aside from the Italian experiment of conducting interviews instead of sending out the questionnaire, most stakeholder involvement remained confined to consultation. In the broader picture however, some of the stakeholders contacted during the PMD survey participated lateron in the case studies, indicating a more thoroughgoing participation, see Figure 2.

[4] *see Description of Work, p.28*

3.3.3 Advisory Committee

The AquaMoney Advisory Committee comprises 24 high-level decision makers from different EU Member States, relevant CIS working groups, NGOs as well as the European Commission's DG Environment and RTD. Involvement of the Advisory Committee in the project takes place through phone and email exchange and personal communication at workshops and seminars. Advisory Committee members have the opportunity to comment on relevant documents produced within the project, and to advise the project team on the general direction of the work. Advisory Committee members are informed about the project's progress, and invited to comment on relevant documents produced within the project, such as the definition note. They are also invited to specify the needs and expectations for guidance material as part of the WP1 assessment of policy maker demand. The Advisory Committee convened for its first meeting in Berlin on 28 March 2007, allowing for an in-depth discussion of the role and relevance of the project as such, the Advisory Committee's role in the project, the information flows between Advisory Committee and the project, and the effective input of the Advisory Committee to the project work. Besides one more official meeting, the committee will continue its informational background activities, such being consulted and informed on current developements. It has also been envisaged to foster the interaction between the Committee members and their respective case study team (by Member State). Apart from giving feedback on the project results and the approach followed, and thereby fine-tuning the project output to the needs of policy makers, the Advisory Committee also has a role for dissemination of project results into the policy community, one of the main constituencies for the AquaMoney project results. The Advisory Committee Members have therefore been chosen to act as "project ambassadors" and multipliers of the project's results in their respective countries and organisations.

As the members of the AC are ideally highly qualified water experts, the AquaMoney project team should try to make use of their accumulated knowledge as best as possible. This includes an extension of the AC degree of stakeholder participation. The AC should not be limited to consultative participation, but should rather be invited to contribute suggestions regarding the details of the AquaMoney project design

Initially, all AC members received an invitation letter stating both the rights and the expectations linked to an AC membership. Thus, all members were given the same level of information before the actual launch of the AC. Prior to their meeting in Berlin, the members of the AC were asked to comment on the proposed agenda. Furthermore, the AC has shared both its views on the proposed working definition for environment and resource costs and benefits, and its views on the quality and features that guidance material should have. Additionally, the AC has indicated key areas where guidance is needed. Moreover, the committee has started to revise the proposed guidelines for environment and resource cost and benefit valuation. It can be argued that the stakeholder involvement oscillates somewhere around involvement and collaboration, with the very start and the very end of the project offering the largest degree of participation –centred around the three meetings with AC participation, whereas the phasis in between are characterised by more informal cooperation. The permanent information exchange between the committee and the committee results in a low degree of formal structuring of the AC. Thus input and suggestions can reach the respective other party in a very short time.

Currently, the AC includes representatives from the Commission, DG ENV and RTD, representatives from the WFD CIS working group B, from three international river commissions, from five national environment and water ministries, from seven national water and environment agencies, from three regional water and environment agencies, from three NGOs and one consultant, thus covering a wide range of AquaMoney project stakeholders.

As of now, the AC has met both in Berlin in March 2007 and in Budapest in April 2008. It will meet one more time before the project ends. Nevertheless, feedback via email and phone allows a continuous exchange of information between the different members and the project team.

N.B.: Although the AC has been invited to join the Bologna interim meeting on the request of its members, participation in this event has been nil. This may partly have been the result of communication problems, partly this may be due to the lack of funding for reimbursement of travel expenses for AC members.

Regardless of the failure of an AC participation in the Bologna conference, total participation including e-mail and phone conversation had lost its momentum between the Berlin and the Budapest meetings. It has to be borne in mind that all AC members are highly engaged in other projects. Currently, the relations with the AC are being revived through direct bilateral contacts between the case study leaders and their respective AC members. Hopes are high that AC input and information exchange will be more lively after the new impulses gained from the Budapest meeting.

3.3.4 Case Studies

Based on the evaluation of the survey to assess the policy maker demand (see above), 11 case studies are conducted in national and international representative river basins in order to test the guidance for environment and resource cost and benefit analysis. A variety of economic valuation techniques will be considered for use within these case studies, including cost measurement approaches such as pollution abatement costs, benefit assessment methods such as contingent valuation and travel costs and approaches based upon integrated hydro-economic modelling of environmental and resource costs and benefits. Approaches are applied uniformly across case studies in order to test the transferability of existing WFD related environmental economic values by comparing and contrasting the case study results among themselves and with the results that would have been obtained based on the meta-analysis performed during initial data gathering. Furthermore, specific identified methodological and policy issues will be addressed in each case study.

In order to shed light on the participation process within the case studies, a questionnaire was circulated. As visible from statements by case study leaders and detailed further below, stakeholders in the case studies include policy makers, i.e. various levels of government bodies from national to municipal, water companies, water users such as industry, agriculture and consumers, non governmental organisations (NGOs) or water-related consultancies, see Figure 3. Not all case studies intend to or will include all possible stakeholders in the process, nor will they involve all selected stakeholders in all stages of the study.

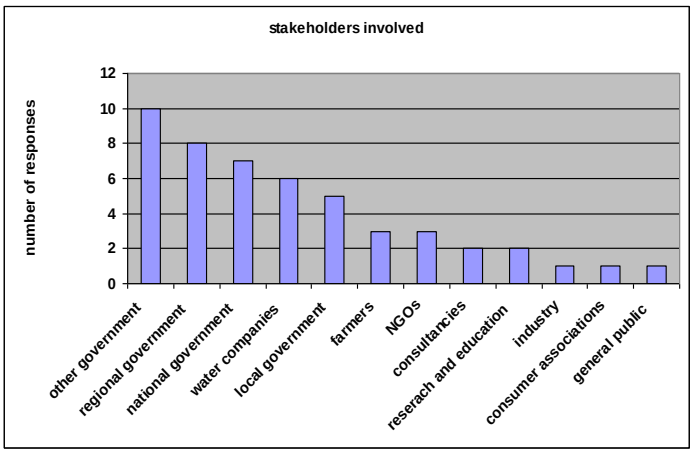

Figure 3 – Composition of stakeholders involved (n=13 , multiple answers possible)

The participation process within the case studies can have different dimensions in different stages of the case study. More specifically participation is likely to occur in the survey exercise, which has been coordinated by the case study teams, see (3.3.2), later on during the actual case study roles for stakeholders include:

- providing general information on the policy context and the approach to WFD implementation
- providing specific information on water quality and uses or suggesting test sites
- commenting on the valuation design
- pre-testing of valuation design
- commenting on the implementation and the results of the valuation study

This list is not exhaustive and merely gives an impression of where stakeholders might participate in the case studies. The form in which participation occurs can range from informal telephone conversations and e-mail exchange to meetings and group discussions. Factors influencing the characteristics of participation include the socio-historic context of the case study in the field, as well as financial and temporal restrictions for each individual study.

The actual involvement of stakeholders usually depends on the group's characteristics. E.g. a rather small group of highly skilled participants can be involved to a very high degree. It follows that stakeholders in the case studies can in some instances contribute more than "consulting", but rather enter into a permanent exchange of opinions and ideas. Both the stakeholders themselves and the research project can profit largely from a deeper involvement. It might be that

stakeholders provide general as well as more specific information to the case studies. Moreover they can contribute in the process by commenting on the valuation design, later on pre-testing the valuation design and finally commenting on implementation and results of the valuation study. A more thoroughgoing participation including design of the case study itself is not necessarily required for two reasons: firstly, the low potential for conflicts of interests does not make it plausible that stakeholders and case study team differ widely about the case study design; secondly, the initial description of work comprises already a considerable amount of information about the appearance of the case studies, making it impossible to comply both with the contract and standards of open process.

The questionnaire asked case study team leaders to rate the likelihood of potential roles for their stakeholders in order to assess the degree of actual stakeholder participation. The overwhelming majority of team leaders employs stakeholders in order to gather specific information on water quality, water uses or potential test sites (92% marked "definitely" or "probably"), thus qualifying as consultative participation. Second in hierarchy was the aim of gathering general information on policy context or general approach to WFD implementation (76% "definitely" or "probably"), being also consultative only. Surprisingly, a relatively high number of team leaders intends to ask stakeholders to comment on implementation and results of the valuation study (63%), translating into "involvement". Participation in the interim phases of valuation design and pre-testing of the valuation design were much less predominant (42% and 45%, respectively) and can almost be classified as "co-operation". It can be concluded that most case studies limit stakeholder involvement to consultative participation while some leaders actually make full use of the array of stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, the team leaders were asked about their satisfaction with the chosen roles for stakeholders. When considering the result, it is a striking fact that the most preferred option – specific information - leads to results either as expected (75%) or even better than expected (25%). A similar picture emerges for general information with results as expected at 75%, over-performance at 17%, only 8% complaining about low performance. The more demanding degrees of involvement entail higher shares of dissatisfaction: 14% for "comment on implementation and results of valuation study", 29% for "comment on valuation design" and 40% for "pre-testing of valuation design". These numbers have to be analysed carefully. Firstly, some team leaders have not attempted yet to involve stakeholders in more than general and specific information gathering. Secondly, the process in the case studies is still ongoing and perception about results might still change. Nevertheless, these figures compel the project team to assist the case study leaders in the participation process. This finding is supported by the fact that no team leader assessed the co-operation – meaning the overall impression from the interaction with stakeholders – as generally "very positive", while three remained sceptical ("neutral") and again three found that co-operation "could be improved", see Figure 4.

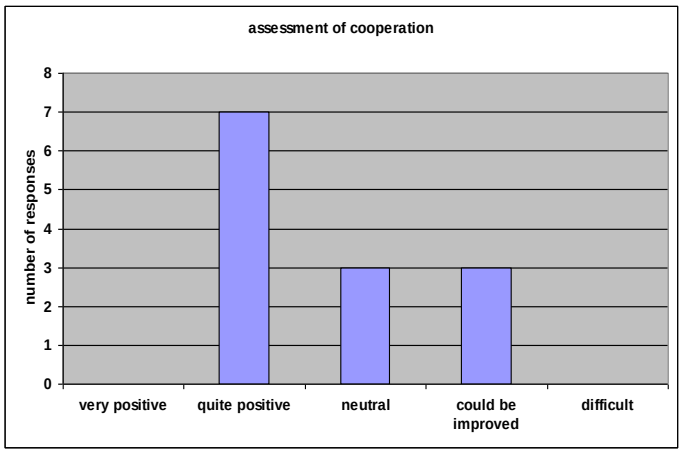

Figure 4 – satisfaction with stakeholder particiaption process (n=13)

Aside from all intended participation in and around the case studies, the valuation approach based on stated preferences bore some inherent participatory elements. Each of the case studies involves a selected sample, be it based on face-to-face interviews or based only on internet surveys. Given the sample is somewhat representative, which obviously is a requirement for validity, then the collected data can serve as a small scale opinion poll. Without entering into the details of the surveys themselves, each consisted of general questions, a CV and CE part, followed by questions on the respondent's socio-economic background. It can be argued that the resulting water valuations have a participatory core, but even more, the general questions allow policy makers and scientist a rare deeper insight into people's perceptions and priorities. Respondents gave information about their perception of the eco-system's quality, the need and priority to protect the environment, thus going much further than simply valuing the water at hand. In the end, the resulting europe-wide data on public opinion on the environment is possibly a very essential by-product of the AquaMoney project.

3.3.5 Website and Further Dissemination

- Website

The AquaMoney project website has been operational at www.aquamoney.org since the start of the project (mid 2006). It comprises an external part, which provides background information on the WFD and the role of economics in the Directive, information about and access to the AquaMoney case studies, lists the project partners and the members of the Advisory Committee, and provides access to the project results and deliverables that are in the public domain. In addition, the website also has a password-protected internal part, which is intended to support the functioning of the project and facilitate communication among project partners.

The dissemination of information through the project website includes relevant news and information not only about milestones and products, but also about relevant policy developments in the WFD implementation process, at a European level and where relevant in the Member States. To this end, the AquaMoney website contains a section with background information on the economic elements of the WFD, including links to relevant policy documents and guidance material produced under the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) process, as well as national-level initiatives and information sources on WFD implementation. In addition, this section also links to other relevant research initiatives and projects.

One key role of the website for the external dissemination is that it provides a quick and easy medium to receive more information on the project and get access to the project results (reports, papers, documents, presentations) that are in the public domain. To support this function, the aquamoney.org website has been highlighted and promoted on several occasions, including the Commission's first report on the WFD implementation (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Towards sustainable water management in the European Union - First stage in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC – SEC (2007) 362). As the purpose of the site is primarily informational, participation is restricted to a one-way "information" level. Obviously, the website remains purely one-way and thus though meeting the description of work requirements, lacks feedback options. Given the priority of reaching a larger audience of stakeholders and the wide range of other participation areas, a feedback option is not mandatory.

Transparency is particularly high in this area of stakeholder participation: the site explains the purpose of AquaMoney including extensive background information on the WFD.

- Further Dissemination

The description of work calls for a strong linkage with other activities at European level related to the WFD implementation. That is, presentations and lectures should be given in the context of qualified conferences and workshops. Audiences can include European and national policy makers, but should definitely also cover scientists and counsellors involved in the implementation of the WFD. As lectures and presentations require at least preliminary results, the most active phase should be the main project phase, whereas presentations in the final phase will allow last minute amendments. The context of the presentations and lectures, i.e. conferences and workshops, will mostly dictate the size of the audience. In order to improve the guidance for environmental and resource costs and benefits, high level stakeholders are given the option to comment and discuss the presented interim findings freely. Permanent improvement calls for ongoing feedback, i.e. presentation and lectures will be given at regular intervals.

As the audience of conferences and workshops on the implementation of the WFD is of limited size, the smaller group size can have positive effects both with regard to the openness of the process, i.e. ability to learn from past feedback for future presentations, as with regard to degree of involvement. In short: personal acquaintance and common work experience will ensure an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Communication and dissemination instruments used to facilitate the management of knowledge and information between the project and the outside world include:

- International and national workshops and a final project conference where project progress, new insights and information will be disseminated and fed back to both the scientific community and WFD expert groups.
- Presentations of project results to WFD CIS working groups and relevant EU bodies. In order to maximise the impact of the project, the project itself and intermediate results are also presented to other projects supported by the EU, such as the Inter Reg North Sea Region project "WaterCosts", and at national and European water conferences and workshops.

In line with these objectives, the AquaMoney project was presented at a number of workshops, seminars and conferences, attended by policy makers, practitioners and administration officials involved in the WFD implementation process, and the wider research community. Dissemination material has also been developed, including a one-page project flyer (business card) and two policy briefs on the AquaMoney project objectives, approach and expected outcomes. Finally, the AquaMoney project was highlighted in relevant research newsletters, such as the DG RTD's "Water and Soil Times" newsletter, devoted to the "Water Cycle and Soil Related Aspects" activities in the European Commission Directorate General for Research. The project was also mentioned in the Commissions first report on the WFD implementation (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Towards sustainable water management in the European Union - First stage in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC – SEC(2007) 362).

The benchmark focuses on presentations and lectures and touches publications and other dissemination activities such as journal articles only lightly, as they are far less prominent and less participative in nature. The same standards as for presentations and lectures can, however, be applied to the latter.

Available data refers to the first reporting period (April 2006 to March 2007). Lectures and presentations were held in front of both policy makers and academia more than 9 times in places as divers as Santiago and Barcelona (Spain), Newcastle and London (UK), Brussels (Belgium), Alsace (France) and Norway. More events will be staged in the near future, though there is no clear information on the exact number to be expected until the end of the project. It is, however, very likely that the current rhythm of dissemination events will be kept.

The dissemination events were attended both by policy makers, by practitioners and administration officials involved in the implementation process, by academic scholars and the wider research community. Although the frequency of events is rather high, there is no guarantee that stakeholders will be informed more than once. As mentioned earlier, it is more than likely that at least some audiences will overlap and thus create some sort of recurrence. Given the nature of lectures and presentations, the process cannot become open in the sense a group discussion can be. Still, the project team incorporates all feedback and comments in future dissemination activities.

4. Interpretation

4.1 Case Studies

The evaluation of the current state of stakeholder participation leads to two fundamental findings: first, all case study team leaders acknowledge the need for stakeholder participation and are already immersed in building up a concise team of stakeholders to support them in their efforts to test guidelines for ERCB valuation. Second, differences in the actual shape of participation were mostly due to differences in the site-specific conditions of the various case studies. It can be observed that larger transboundary river basins necessitate high ranking stakeholders, while smaller basins may work just fine with the executive level, i.e. local government and local population. Some river basins are more prone to conflict, here stakeholders from the civil society organisations join ranks with the decision makers – the future benefactors of the AquaMoney guidance, i.e. the WFD-implementing authorities.

As the main goal of the case studies was not to foster direct stakeholder participation in the project – which is rather part of the dissemination team's roles – but rather to develop and test a valuation for ERCB for the future guidance, it is only straightforward that efforts dedicated towards stakeholder participation are always additional efforts and clearly a bonus.

Considering the rather "indirect" participation element inherent to the stated preferences valuation method, it can be found that stakeholder participation within the case studies is very substantial and may have positive outcomes way beyond the project targets themselves. The case study survey data set comes down to a Europe-wide water quality and water scarcity opnion poll relfecting both EU citizen's perceptions and priorities in the field of water protection and general eco-system conservation.

4.2 Policy Maker Demand

The policy maker demand survey has generated a rather low response rate, facing considerable difficulties in some of the Member States. This, however, means that the case study leaders have undertaken extra efforts to attract a sufficient number of respondents. Some Member States contributed intentionally a restricted number of responses – in some cases only one – where group answers were given. It follows that the sheer number of responses can not be taken as the sole indicator for the success of the survey.

4.3 Advisory Committee

Although the advisory committee is already fully established and working, given its modular set-up, it is always possible to add extra stakeholders to the committee. Additionally, the degree of participation can still be influenced. Hence the recommendation to ensure that communication with AC members be established at a higher frequency, thus giving the members more incentive to actively participate in all phases of the process. Theoretically, though, the AC has a very high degree of flexibility and the possibility to influence high level decisions of the AquaMoney project team, thus achieving already now a fairly open participatory process.

4.4 Website and Further Dissemination

Currently, the AquaMoney project, especially the case study part, is gaining momentum. Thus the role of the website as a means for one-stop initial information on the project is becoming more relevant. Consequently, a more frequent update of the available information in the near future might be beneficial for an improved stakeholder participation within the project. For this purpose, the introduction of a possibility to give feedback via email or a guest-book function would introduce an additional layer of public participation: consultation. On the other hand, the current design of the website allows interested individuals to gather extensive background information. Further dissemination activities are already now very much part of the AquaMoney project work. Still, with the amount of tangible results increasing over

time, it is recommended to increase the additional dissemination measures via presentations, lectures and publications and to also increase the frequency of uploads.

4.5 General Recommendations and Conclusions

Overall, the AquaMoney project is a example of the different channels participation in a research project may take. But itis not participation as a means for itself, rather as a way to improve the guidance on economic evaluation of ERCB. The project employs participative methods in at least 5 fields: the case studies, the Policy Maker Demand survey, the Advisory Committee, the Website and in further dissemination activities. In most areas, stakeholder participation is working well and delivers already positive outcomes.

A general conclusion of the benchmarking exercise is that all case study team leaders acknowledge the importance of stakeholder participation for the project success and commit themselves to improving stakeholder interaction as best as possible. The present benchmark attempts to support these approaches by giving orientation on what can be expected and what other case study groups have achieved so far and hence, the experience from one case study partner can be used in other case studies. However, as stakeholder participation is always responding to the specific needs of the individual project at hand, there can be no question of aiming at a fully harmonised participation process. Rather, the present report can be used as a reference when trying to identify reasons for differences in participation.

The evaluation of stakeholder participation within the case studies has been somewhat hampered by the fact that this is a still ongoing process. Consequently, all findings and statements can only be seen as preliminary and extra caution is required when drawing conclusions upon them. In the end, the assessment of stakeholder participation within AquaMoney touched on a whole range of issues, a number of which are still not fully understood in the literature. Particularly, the research on optimal levels of participation is only just emerging. Future research will have to focus on the comparison of ex-ante and ex-post findings on optimal stakeholder participation.

The interaction of stakeholders of different hierarchical levels, including political decision makers, with the project scientists results in a highly complex net of relationships that have both a formal and an informal side. The former is widely described in the official documentation of the AquaMoney project, culminating in the present benchmark for stakeholder participation. The informal side however has been somehow neglected until now, but is a considerable additional element of participation. In the terms of Wenger (1998), communities of practice are defined by

- their joint enterprise – here: the implementation of the WFD ,
- relationships of mutual engagement binding the members together into a social entity – here: mostly the organisational framework provided by the project team, i.e. case studies, advisory council and project team,
- shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, vocabulary etc.) that members develop over time – here: the economical view on river basin management.

Communities of practice offer multiple advantages to all the organisations that are linked through its members: they are a structure that emphasises the learning process. Thus novelties in the field can be communicated quickly to all members of a community which also serves as support platform for difficulties that can not be solved within the formal traditional structure of the involved organisations.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the AquaMoney project offers a substantial potential for the emergence of long lasting communities of practice. These can be either the stakeholders of each case study separately, all the case study leaders together or the members of the advisory council. Each community of practice has the potential to go on beyond the end of AquaMoney, especially, since the AquaMoney project itself is widely known in the WFD-community. Consequently, the value of participation within the AquaMoney project does not only derive from improvements in the scientific process, i.e. a better guidance, or the increased efficiency of implementation of the guidance, but also from the long-term effects of the informal communities of practice created during the project.

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5. Annex

Questionnaire sent out to the case study leaders

Questionnaire on stakeholder participation in the AquaMoney case studies

Dear XXX,

As part of our work on the AquaMoney project, we would like to investigate how stakeholders have been involved in the work on the AquaMoney case studies. This should ultimately result in a benchmark for stakeholder participation within the AquaMoney project. This benchmark is meant to account for differences in participatory input between the different case studies and thus facilitate objective comparison.

"Stakeholders", in this case, are those parties that will use the output of the AquaMoney project, or who will otherwise be affected by it. This includes the respondents to the policy maker demand survey, as well as any decision makers (administration officials, representatives of interest groups etc.) who you may have contacted / who you plan to contact in the course of the case study work.

The questionnaire consists of two sections: the first part refers to the Assessment of Policy Maker Demand, to which you contributed in January-March 2007 by identifying policy makers. The second part refers to the ongoing work in the AquaMoney case studies.

We kindly ask you to answer the following two-page questionnaire, which should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. We would highly appreciate if you could return the questionnaire until 31 July 2007. Please feel free to contact me at max.gruenig@ecologic.eu or at +49-30-86880-108 if there are any unclarities concerning this questionnaire.

We understand that this is an additional effort and value your time and commitment.

Thank you,

Max Grünig & Benjamin Görlach

Ecologic

FYI: The following institutions or persons from The Netherlands responded to the survey on policy maker demand:

XXX

A Assessment of policy maker demand

1 **How did you select the stakeholders that you sent the questionnaire to?**

	very true	quite true	neutral	rather not	not true
• reputation of the institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• experience with WFD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• personal acquaintance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• political balance in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• diversity of opinion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• regional balance in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• other criteria (please specify):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 **How many questionnaires did you send out?**

none	1 - 2	3 - 5	5 – 10	10 – 20	> 20
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3 **Are you satisfied with the response?**

very much	mostly satisfied	neutral	not really	not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4 **Do you have the impression that the exercise provided useful information?**

yes	no	neutral	don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐

B Participation during the case study

5 **How many stakeholders did you contact?**

none	1	2	3 – 5	5 – 10	> 10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6 **How many (additional) stakeholders do you intend to contact?**

none	1	2	3 – 5	5 – 10	> 10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7 **Are these people that you already contacted during the assessment of policy maker demand?**

yes	no	partly
☐	☐	☐

8 **What groupings do they represent?**

national government	☐	industry (or industry association)	☐
other government (environment agencies, water board or other)	☐	farmers (or farmers association)	☐
regional government (regions)	☐	consumer associations	☐
local government (municiplaities)	☐	NGOs	☐
water companies	☐	consultancies	☐
other (please elaborate)			

9 **How often did you / will you contact them**

more than five times	more than twice	twice	once	never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10	**Based on which criteria did you select the stakeholders you contacted ?**	very true	quite true	neutral	rather not	not true
	• reputation of the institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• experience with WFD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• personal acquaintance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• political balance in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• diversity of opinion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• regional balance in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• other (please elaborate):					

11	**What role did the stakeholders play in the case study?**	Definitely	Probably	Possibly	Unlikely	Definitely not
	• provide general information (e.g. policy context, general approach to WFD implementation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• provide specific information (e.g. data on water quality or on water uses, suggestions for test sites)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• comment on valuation design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• pre-testing of valuation design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	• comment on implementation and results of valuation study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12	**Where did the results differ from your expectations?**	better than expected	as expected	inferior than expected
	• provide general information (e.g. policy context, general approach to WFD implementation)	☐	☐	☐
	• provide specific information (e.g. data on water quality or on water uses, suggestions for test sites)	☐	☐	☐
	• comment on valuation design	☐	☐	☐
	• pre-testing of valuation design	☐	☐	☐
	• comment on implementation and results of valuation study	☐	☐	☐

13	**Has the involvement of stakeholders been documented in any way?**	yes	no	partly
		☐	☐	☐

14	**How would you rate the cooperation?**	very positive	quite positive	neutral	could be improved	difficult
		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15 **Do you have any recommendations regarding participation in the case studies?** (please elaborate)