

## "GoverNat"

### Is there a lack of enthusiasm for participatory approaches?



Governance today extends beyond the policy making processes of governments to increasingly include Local Authorities, private partners and the civil society.

49 interviews were conducted with practitioners involved in water and biodiversity governance in 11 countries. The Water Framework Directive distinguishes:

- ❖ **consultation of the public**, who should have access to information and be given the opportunity to comment;
- ❖ **participation of the interested parties**, who should be encouraged to be actively involved in the measures to take.

The main interviews highlighted that administrations have difficulties implementing participation in water governance:

- A first attitude considers that a lack of citizens' involvement is not a problem because politicians are elected by these same people and can therefore make decisions on their behalf. The main challenge for participation is to reach agreement with other organizations having power to block decisions or obstruct implementation.
- A second view considers that mobilizing the public is useful when it serves the purpose of implementing policy.

Altogether, the way these practitioners present and analyze their experiences shows a considerable degree of reluctance to engage in extensive participation, especially with the general public. The GoverNat interviewees identified this reluctance themselves, saying that the administration is not prepared. Many interviewees recognized that organizing participation requires special skills and additional financial resources, both of which are frequently unavailable to the bodies of public administration charged with WFD implementation.

The interviews also showed that there are civil servants power struggles within the same administration and between governmental organizations.

The interviewees find that in concrete situations economic interests usually prevail over other interests such as water management or biodiversity conservation.

Successful participation ultimately means redefining roles and power relations. The "authorities' dilemma" is that they both need and fear people's participation.

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## Portugal

### GMES

#### Global Monitoring for Environment and Security

GMES is a joint initiative from the European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA) to develop innovative and cost-effective management tools based on Earth Observation systems and technologies.

"Águas de Portugal" (AdP) and "Instituto da Água" (INAG) have been working with "Instituto Superior Técnico" (IST) on specific applications of satellite imagery for water management, which in operation at some critical locations have provided reliable and cost-effective monitoring, forecast and pollution event analysis.

The best and less costly results are obtained by combining models, in-situ data and remote sensing data.

Models allow the description of processes and are very useful as interpolation and forecasting tools.

The quality of their results improves with the detail of the field data. Data scarcity can be improved using remote sensing data.

The process will produce a more reliable modeling tool, less dependent from in situ data with obvious advantages in terms of cost.

In fact, as processes are more accurately understood and represented, less information will be required for each model run. Satellites can override the need for extensive field monitoring, with cheap, fast and reliable data.

At present, the partners are implementing a demonstration project covering the Portuguese part of the Tagus Basin, with the purpose of building an information service dedicated to water managers and water users' needs.

This demonstration project, funded by ESA, will deliver relevant information to manage the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (sensitive area delimitation, wastewater treatment requirements' determination), the Water Framework Directive (non compliance cause-effect relationship analysis, optimization of Programs of Measures, cost analysis) and the Environmental Liability Directive (pollution events cause-effect relationship analysis).

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