



Guideline on multilateral co-operation alliances – English version

[Deliverable 6.2]

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These guidelines are a summary of recommendations resulting from the participation process within the WAgriCo project, and also from many years of cooperation in the field of drinking water conservation and the relatively young involvement in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

1 Possibilities and limitations of multilateral cooperation alliances: The example of regional cooperation bodies in Lower Saxony

Only limited financial resources are available for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. However, since achieving the goals of the Directive calls for a wide variety of measures, some of them on a substantial scale, there is a need to make use of available potential having regard to existing approaches and planning and funding frameworks, and to develop a solution that is supported by all local bodies responsible for measures and planning.

Although numerous activities in the planning areas covered by the WFD pursue aims that are essentially different from those of water conservation, this need not prevent them having positive impacts on the groundwater or surface waters. Moreover, targeted steering and development of the measures resulting from various demands on land makes it possible to reinforce such effects. Ideally, a joint measure can make it possible to achieve a variety of goals, including water conservation.

With its “regional cooperation bodies” at geographical level in the 34 management areas, Lower Saxony has – in line with its tradition of cooperative participation – pointed the way to a cooperative approach to participation in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. Work on the surface waters and the associated groundwater bodies or groups is carried on under the umbrella of the regional cooperation bodies.

These regional cooperation bodies are primarily concerned with active involvement of water users, especially in the field of monitoring and the development of programmes of measures for the management areas. They are bodies designed to conduct the dialogue between administrative authorities, water sector actors and the public at the level of the management area and to create an alliance of all partners involved. The regional cooperation bodies address the main issues and problems of water resources management arising from the Lower Saxony Water Act (*Niedersächsisches Wassergesetz – NWG*) and the solutions they consider appropriate. This provides an opportunity to draw up innovative proposals in Lower Saxony that suit the characteristics of the regions, and to take new approaches where appropriate.

The members of the regional cooperation bodies undertake to play an active role, which also includes the groups they represent, and see themselves as multipliers.

2 Potential participants

The participants in multilateral cooperation must on the one hand cover as broad a base as possible in the groups concerned. On the other hand it is important to recruit effective multipliers on a representative basis to ensure optimum distribution of the process in the field while keeping the size of the cooperation bodies down to manageable levels.

2.1 Rural districts and local authorities

For a large proportion of the relevant measures in the field of surface waters, the rural districts as lower water and nature conservation authorities (UWB, UNB) are either the planning or the permit-issuing authority.

2.2 Maintenance associations

Maintenance associations are potentially the bodies responsible for measures relating to surface waters. They are knowledge holders for efficient combinations of measures, and it is absolutely essential to include them in the planning of measures.

2.3 Agriculture and forestry

Ideally, agriculture and forestry are represented both by the official representatives (in Lower Saxony the technical authority is the Chamber of Agriculture) and by associations like the “Landvolkverband” (rural community association). A large proportion of the measures to improve groundwater quality are needed in the field of agricultural use. Timely involvement is therefore essential.

2.4 Water supply companies

Water supply companies are knowledge holders in the field of groundwater conservation, since they can often contribute many years’ experience of drinking water conservation as a result of their own economic interests.

2.5 Representatives of industry

Representatives of industry may have to be involved in participation processes for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, both as water users (process water, cooling water, hydro power) and as project bodies addressing downstream compensatory and substitute measures.

2.6 Environmental associations

Environmental associations not only represent interested stakeholders as a counterbalance to the economic interests of water users, but are also knowledge holders for measures with goals in the field of water or nature conservation.

2.7 Land consolidation authorities

They carry out land consolidation and can provide comprehensive information about past, present or forthcoming water and nature conservation measures and the funding facilities available under such procedures.

2.8 Land authorities for water management and nature conservation

The Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency (*Niedersächsischer Landesbetrieb für Wasserwirtschaft, Küsten- und Naturschutz – NLWKN*) is responsible for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Lower Saxony and is the regional authority for

- operation and maintenance of the Land's own facilities and bodies of water,
- planning and construction of water management facilities and bodies of water,
- nature conservation and
- authorisation procedures in the water management sector.

3 Development of multilateral cooperation alliances

3.1 Institutionalisation and organisation of participation structure

The first step is to define the geographical area to which the cooperative alliance applies, i.e. to coordinate target areas for participation with target regions for the planning of measures.

Next comes an analysis of the target groups, partners and actors, and – on the basis of this – the selection of participants (see Chapter 2). Active participants are authorities (as initiators), stakeholder groups, water conservation advisers, directly affected parties, and actors/implementers of measures (farmers, planning organisations etc.), who can make direct local contributions to implementation of the WFD.

In order to coordinate the tasks and limits of the multilateral cooperative alliances with all concerned, it is necessary to draw up a joint description of responsibilities, roles and tasks (management, moderation, experts, affected parties, implementers etc.).

3.2 Description of work processes

A. Introductory phase

In the introductory phase, the members of the cooperate alliance are familiarised with the necessary basic principles. There is an exchange of information about existing plans, expected framework conditions and the objectives of the individual members.

The introductory phase serves to prepare for the planning phase. It should provide a general overview of the activities for closer study and should thus open up the greatest possible spectrum of potential synergies.

B. Planning phase

During the planning phase, possible measures and plans for the region are discussed with the bodies responsible for measures and planning. The aim is to identify existing and potential synergies for water conservation and take account of the interests of the alliance members. This phase aggregates results, superimposes planning scenarios, determines degrees of coverage, and hence identifies joint fields of activity for different planning authorities. It is then evaluated by all participants as the first stage in the cooperation phase.

C. Cooperation phase

At the start of the cooperation phase, the information obtained is made available for discussion by all members of the cooperative alliance. In an intensive supra-sectoral cooperation process they can now discuss possible solutions and specific proposals for measures. The next step is to embark on effective implementation of measures, as far as possible with a neutral impact on costs and to the benefit of all concerned, in the interest of achieving the goals of the Water Framework Directive.

3.3 Results of participation and their future use

Successful cooperation results in catalogues and descriptions of measures that have the support of all participants and for which the bodies responsible have already been identified. Acceptance of the catalogues of measures is assured by the broad-based multiplier effect of the alliance members.

The aim of the proposals is the adoption of appropriate and targeted measures as a component of future management plans.