

Use of participatory scenario modelling as platforms in stakeholder dialogues[#]

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Abstract

A participatory methodology, based on dialogues between stakeholders and experts has been developed and tested in the drainage area to Kagebo Bay in the Baltic Sea. This study is focused on the EU Water Framework Directive, with emphasis on reduction of eutrophication. The drainage area is included in the WFD administrative area of the Motala Ström River basin. A similar approach is now applied in a recently initiated project in the Thukela River basin, with focus on impacts of climate change on water resources. The methodology is based on the idea that a catchment model serves as a platform for the establishment of a common view of present conditions and the causes behind these conditions. In the following steps, this is followed by model-assisted agreement on environmental goals (i.e. what do we want the future to look like?) and local agreement on a remedy or mitigation plans in order to reduce environmental impact (e.g. eutrophication); alternatively to adapt to conditions that cannot be determined by local actions (e.g. climate change). By involving stakeholder groups in this model-supported stepwise process, it is ensured that all stakeholder groups involved have a high degree of confidence in the presented model results, and thereby enable various actors involved to share a common view, regarding both present conditions, goals and the way to reach these goals. Although this is a process that is time- (and cost-) consuming, it is hypothesised that the use of this methodology is two-pronged: it increases the willingness to carry out remedies or necessary adaptations to a changing environment, and it increases the level of understanding between the various groups and therefore ameliorates the potential for future conflicts. Compared to traditional use of model results in environmental decision-making, the experts' role is transformed from a one-way communication of final results to assistance in the various steps of the participatory process.

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