

Summary of the session: „Setting up an evaluation procedure on the success of co-governance & implementing the project indicators”, Friday, 20th October 2017 (8.30-10.30h), Varberg Sweden (WaterCoG partner-meeting)

Participants:

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The session built on the indicator discussion which took place in September 2016. It started with a collection on aims and central aspects of a successful evaluation in the WaterCoG project, leading to discussion within the national groups on the pilot specific operationalization of the evaluation. The present document summarizes the results of the discussion. **In its current version it is sent to all WaterCoG partners for comments before 15th November 2017** to Ilke (bm@interessen-im-fluss.de)

In addition to the document, the slides presented at the session are included in the pdf: WaterCoG_Evaluation_October2017_Varberg.pdf (has been sent out with the same email). Both documents can be found at the WaterCoG Sharepoint. At a later point, parts of this document may directly feed into the evaluation report.

PLEASE CHECK ALSO FOR TIMELINE & TASKS IN THE DOCUMENT! THANK YOU.

Evaluation Procedure

Implementing evaluation requires a number of steps:

1. **Establish purpose & timeline of evaluation:**
They have been agreed on during the session and are summarized in the present document.
2. **Define indicators and their information needs.**
Indicators indicate i.e. show if a target has been reached. They need to be measurable and understandable. Indicators have different data needs. Resources for additional measuring or data gathering has to be allocated – for both: the baseline and the evaluation by the end of the project (and if any additional measuring points are taken).
3. **Clarify stakeholders' roles & expectations for the evaluation process**
WaterCoG aims for a participatory evaluation. At what stage the participatory approach is implemented, needs to suit the individual pilots. For the different evaluation levels, different stakeholder involvement will be required. The project level indicators will be identified first by the WaterCoG partners; stakeholders may be consulted on this, and in any case the outcome of the indicators will be discussed. At pilot level outcome, i.e. reflecting individual

pilots' targets, some pilots will involve stakeholders already at the indicator definition, data gathering as well as on the final interpretation of the outcome. All partners have to develop their strategy on this until the end of 2017, including- where necessary- the discussion with respective stakeholders.

These two preceding steps (2+3) have to implement by all WaterCoG partners for their pilots by 15th December 2017.

4. **Implement: collect data:** This need to be carried out twice. Once for the baseline; this will be an ex-post evaluation reflecting the state of the pilot in the beginning of the project (November 2015). This should be finalized by **March 2018**, and presented at the next partner meeting. A second set of data needs to be collected **early 2019**, showing the changes due to WaterCoG.
5. Analyse the information (needs time!!)
6. Build consensus over results (may need time)

These two preceding steps (5 + 6) will take place in the 2nd quarter of 2019, and will most likely need both a stakeholder workshop at pilots' level, and a workshop at project level. Recommendations need to be identified.

7. Prepare action plan on next steps (in WaterCoG: write final report, and in the pilots how to go on...?). This will be in the hands of WP6 coordination (OOWV / IIF).

Step1: Aim and purpose of the evaluation

WaterCoG has promised to implement an evaluation which is scientifically sound and has been set up in a participatory way. It will provide answers to the overall question "How can co-governance deliver sufficiently and effectively support? ") (cf. proposal text).

The WaterCoG evaluation aims to facilitate learning about how WaterCoG partners and similar organisations get local stakeholders involved into water management. It will help to enable the conditions for successful co-governance approaches. The WaterCoG evaluation will also to show if co-governance can help to improve the environment, and what the advantages of co-governance in comparison to "traditional" top-down approaches are.

The WaterCoG partners agreed that evaluation is a very important part of the project. It needs to serve both aims: reporting up to the programme, and informing "down" to the stakeholders and the pilots. The project process should be informed by the evaluation, i.e. highlight warning points / moments in the pilots, and showing if there is any need for adaptation.

In WaterCoG, successful evaluation will help to

- Emphasize transnational exchange
- Show benefits of pilots
- Go beyond project indicators
- Facilitate learning for others
 - o Identify points to take forward
 - o May take the form of a guidance or handbook to be better communicated



- Provides room for deep exchange during the process
 - o Find out points working (not so) well
- Provide arguments to further policy

Step 2: Defining Indicators- Current status and To Do's

As a process, the WaterCoG evaluation needs to distinguish two levels: The project evaluation building on the result indicators as agreed on in the contract, and the pilot-specific evaluation which reflects the individual pilots' target and focus ("what we really want to get out of the pilot"). Both levels need to be implemented in each of the partner countries / in the pilots and may need different indicators.

Further, following a scientific approach refers in WaterCoG to two central aspects:

- a) Defining target and indicators as early as possible, and before the final evaluation;
- b) Establishing a baseline, i.e. values for the indicators at the start of the project, reflecting the state of the pilot areas before the implementation of new WaterCoG co-governance approaches

Project Results Indicators

The WaterCoG partners have agreed to measure their impact according to the following project result indicators:

| Indicator | Target | Unit | Definition |
|--|--------|------|---|
| Increased return on public investment by adopting participatory/co-governance approaches to the management of NSR ecosystems | 20 | % | Demonstrate using Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) the % increase in returns for every euro equivalent of public funding on implementing environmental policy. Using agreed methodology we will measure how participatory approaches increase the value of ecosystem services (natural capital) provided, unlock additional cross-sector investment and deliver direct savings through increased stakeholder-led implementation of measures. |
| Improvements to the environmental status of pilot areas Target: 15% | 15 | % | Number of water bodies with a measured improvement or prevention of further deterioration (where this is currently predicted) in 'status' according to the current (baseline) and end of project classifications under the EU directive(s) most relevant to each pilot. |
| Long term cross sector commitment (sustainability) to co-governance approaches in pilot areas | 3 | Yrs | Defined as a written commitment from key public, private and NGO organisations within each pilot to a partnership agreement, strategy, management plan or other similar output that describes a co-governance approach to managing ecosystems. The aim is for such commitments to extend for at least 3 years beyond the project term. |



Reflecting the diversity of the different pilots and countries, each of these indicators needs to be operationalized at pilot level. This means that in each pilot, the WaterCoG partners have to identify indicators which are measurable and for which data exists or can be provided (i.e. resources are available for possibly required measuring activities). During the discussion in the national groups first ideas were discussed. For example, in the Swedish pilot, **ecological improvement** could be measured by hectares of land not affected by erosion any more. This is data easily obtainable, and of interest to stakeholders. In UK, the number of projects (km of restored river habitats, flood storage created, water quality increased or...) implemented or initiated by the co-governance approach would point towards the longer-term impacts.

The Swedish partners considered a comparison between the “WaterCoG” district and a district with no co-governance approach both for the indicator “economic return on public investment” and “increased commitment”. In this context it became apparent that an indicators needs to have a well-defined target: A decrease in responses during the formal consultation process could be that stakeholder do have trust in the process and are sufficiently involved, or simply do not care and not want to be involved at all.

With regard to increased commitment, the UK pilots are aiming for a signed commitment for the joint development of a catchment plan. The German pilots would like to reflect the increase of trust and a change of perception.

Further discussion, also with stakeholders in the pilots, is needed. All pilots have to defined their indicators by end of 2017 and a strategy on how local stakeholders shall contribute to the evaluation process (see **Step 3** above).

Next Steps:

All WaterCoG partners have agreed to

- Implement Step 2 and 3 of the Evaluation Procedure until end of 2017 (15th December 2017).
- Collect data for the baseline until March 2018 (Step 4 of the Evaluation Procedure)

It is most urgent –as we all agreed - that this process is implemented. For general guidance on evaluation procedures, the HarmoniCOP Handbook “Learning together to management together- Improving Participation in Water Management” may be useful. Hardcopies are still available. Or just give Ilke a call.

