



# Public Participation in River Basin Management

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## Introduction

# Water Framework Directive (WFD) & Flooding Directive (FD):

- River basin approach
- Public Participation
- Dutch Example: Room for the River



## River basin approach

- Quality objectives: River basin management plan
- Quantity objectives: Flood risk management plan
- Cooperation



## International river basin district

Single or coordinated river basin management plan & flood risk management plan:

- Principle of solidarity
- Dispute settlement mechanism



# WFD: Preparation of a River basin management plan

## Inform and consult the public:

- Time table and work programme
- Overview of significant measures
- Draft copies of the plan
- Six months for comments
- Background information on request



# **FD: Preparation of a Flood risk management plan**

## **Inform and consult the public:**

- Preliminary flood risk assessment
- Flood hazard maps
- Flood risk maps
- Flood risk management plan
- Comments of the public



## Implementation: judicial review

### **Environmental impact assessment of projects**

Access to court to challenge:

decisions, acts and omissions subject to public participation procedures

(a) a sufficient interest or

(b) impairment of a right

Court control of the limit of discretion



# The Netherlands



**December 1993**



# Measures





## Room for the River

### **Spatial Planning Key Decision**

- Purpose: flood control and environmental quality objectives
- 350 km river and 150 forelands
- 4 million people and major industries



## Public participation

### *“Regional design sessions”*

- 3 Ministeries
- 4 Provinces
- 46 Municipalities
- 6 Water boards
- 15 Interest groups



## Inform and consult

For the general public:

- Exhibition by boat
- Public information market
- Computer game
- Regional meetings



## Evaluation Public Participation

- Source of information
- Views of local authorities and stakeholders were taken into account at an early stage
  - Plans that do not fit are discarded
  - Commitment to Room for the River
  - Network for information exchange



## The next stage: implementation

### **Large, costly controversial projects**

- Governmental project decision and permits
- EIA per project
- Judicial review

### **Remaining projects**

- Municipal plans and permits
- Water board plans and permits
- EIA per project
- Judicial review



## Conclusions

- River basin approach requires loyal cooperation: solidarity
- Public participation in the preparation of plans: inform and consult stakeholders, preferably also across the border and downstream
- Dutch example Room for the River: Benefits outweigh costs and time

[www.ruimtevoorderivier.nl](http://www.ruimtevoorderivier.nl)