



**Towards
an Evaluation Method
for Public Participation Processes
in AquaStress and NeWater**

A proposal for both projects

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I. Background

AquaStress (AS) and NeWater (NW) are European Commission-sponsored projects that develop, test and propose interdisciplinary solutions for situations of too much, too little or too polluted water in the case of AS and that promote the transition to river management systems which can better cope with flooding, drought and pollution in the case of NW.

Both projects work at selected international test sites (eight for AS and seven for NW) with local scientific and administrative partners as well as other stakeholders of the public (e.g. farmers who use an underperforming irrigation system or citizens affected by recurrent river floods).

Effective stakeholder participation is considered among the most important elements of both projects. Thus, they envisage monitoring and evaluation of the participatory processes used (NeWater 2003, 56; AquaStress 2005, 32 and 74).

It is the Work Packages (WPs) 5.1 (AS) and 3.1 (NW) that are to develop monitoring and evaluation methods and tools. Since the “kick-off” of the projects in January (NW) and February (AS) 2005, WPs 5.1 and 3.1 have provided a “Questionnaire for Backstopping, Monitoring and Evaluation of the processes and results in the AquaStress case study sites” and a “Protocol for Tracking the extent and quality of stakeholder involvement (participation) in NeWater case studies”. Evaluation questions have been also provided in the NW “Baseline Description Report”.

It is now possible to propose an approach that combines the previous tools. This newly developed approach also benefits from a rather thorough review of the relevant literature (see below) which renders it scientifically robust.

II. The purpose of this paper

This paper proposes a comprehensive and harmonized evaluation approach for participatory methods used in AS and NW.¹

The new approach will:

- i. Exchange previously developed tools for evaluating public participation with a new, scientifically developed and tested toolkit – basically a short questionnaire.
- ii. Incorporate the older tools – such as the above mentioned ones - into interview guidelines (to be developed).

In practice, the new approach proposes a simple separation of the evaluation task:

- A short and easy questionnaire to be administered by the site partners to stakeholders (and maybe the wider public) - probably only twice during the project duration.
- Interview/ coaching sessions with small groups of site partners and stakeholders based on detailed interview guides. These sessions are to be facilitated by WPs 5.1 and 3.1.

With this approach, the evaluators hope to:

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- reduce the evaluation work load for site partners and thus render their contribution to evaluation more realistic
- stand the evaluation tool on scientifically firmer ground
- create synergy between the two European projects
- enlarge the pool of comparable data for research on participatory methods

The paper will develop the new approach as follows by describing:

1. The method used for developing a scientifically more robust approach.
2. The most relevant findings of the literature review that was carried out.
3. The practical consequences of those findings for evaluations of participatory methods in AS and NW.

III. The method used for developing a scientifically more robust approach

The above-mentioned “Stakeholder Tracking Protocol” (for NW) had to be developed within two months into the project only and thus could not benefit from a systematic literature review. Similarly, the questionnaire for AS arose after a “rough and dirty” review that only considered a fragment of the literature.

By contrast, the new approach is based on a “semi-systematic search” that, however, the author considers robust enough for delivering a quality evaluation approach.

The literature search started from the review of some articles on participatory methods evaluation available at the institute of the author. The works cited therein yielded additional literature that was then mostly found on the internet.

Yet, not all relevant works could be obtained in this way or through other means (e.g. library services) by the time of writing. Also, a systematic literature search on the internet (through Google and ScienceDirect) was not carried out.

Nevertheless, the search yielded:

1. A comprehensive picture of what methods for evaluating participatory processes currently are “on the market”. This picture is drawn from two systematic literature reviews. Rowe and Frewer (2004) discuss 30 previous contributions on how to evaluate public participation. Earlier, Lynn and Busenberg (1995) systematically reviewed evaluations of Citizen Advisory Committees.
2. The majority of the few (according to Rowe and Frewer 2004) approaches that systematically develop and test evaluation criteria and measurement instruments (Beierle and Konisky 2000; Frewer, Rowe, Marsh and Reynolds 2001; Schuett, Selin and Carr 2001; Webler, Tuler and Krueger 2001, Beierle 2002). These are approaches that rely on relatively large and diverse samples of interviewees or case studies whom they ask what effective participatory activities are.
3. Other works that raise the question of relevant evaluation criteria and add to the discussion even if they usually confine themselves to a literature review and/ or the application of their proposed criteria to relatively small samples (Rosener 1978; Rosener 1981; Wiedemann and Femers 1992; Syme and Sadler 1994; Webler, Kastenholz and Renn 1995; Ashford and Rest 1999; Bryner 2001; Webler and Tuler 2001; Syme and Nancarrow 2002).
4. Additional perspectives on evaluation criteria from authors that:

- either evaluate specific participatory methods such as community dinners and community conversations (Carr and Halvorsen 2001) or specific processes/cases (Cooper 2002; Sipilä and Tyrväinen 2005)
- discuss difficulties and challenges on the way to draw up evaluation frameworks for participatory methods (Delli Priscoli and Creighton 1983; Beierle 1999; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Rowe and Frewer 2004 also discuss this topic extensively)
- give their opinions as professionals (Nelkin and Pollak 1979; Creighton 1999; and Creighton 2005) on general guidelines and criteria for running and evaluating participatory processes.

Considering that the “semi-systematic search” has produced a reliable overview knowledge on what evaluation methods exist, how several of them were developed, and which arguments dominate their discussion, it seems now safe and pragmatic to select among them for proposing evaluation methods for AS and NW.

IV. The most relevant findings of the literature review

Before focusing on the literature, however, it needs to be specified what AS and NW exactly want to evaluate regarding participatory processes.

AS ventures to know the following:

- Have the used approaches been effective?
- What lessons can be learned to improve public participation in water management (AquaStress 2005, 74 and 163)

NW is interested in:

- The effectiveness of participatory tools and methods used
- The political, institutional and historical background for participation processes in the river basins
- Barriers and bridges to effective communication and cooperation in collaborative research and policy formulation for river basin management
- Sequences of interaction with stakeholders
- Key interaction events along the process
- The role of stakeholders and their relations
- Perceptions developed², and the level of commitment
- Appropriation by stakeholders of research (results and/ or dynamics) and of tools designed
- Side-effects assessment (NeWater 2003, 56-7)

In summary these 11 points lead to the following evaluation requirements:

- portray the initial circumstances (context) for starting participation processes
- describe the most important developments “on the way” (process)
- assess to which extent previously defined goals (outcomes) have been achieved

Now, what does the literature offer in terms of these demands?

² The DoW of NW is not clear to whose perceptions these are and about what. However the question catalogue for the baseline assessment in NW also provides this question: “Perception of the actors – what the water management system should be like, how it can aid the decisions/ transitions, etc.”

1. Essential definitions

First of all, the literature offers a range of definitions for “public participation”. A classic view, proposed by Arnstein (1969), equals participation with redistributing power to citizens (as opposed to policy makers who already have power) to substantially change the status quo. Every public involvement activity below decision making shared between citizens and policy makers for Arnstein represents some kind of “placation” or “tokenism”.

Today, most authors (according to Rowe/ Frewer 2004, 515) seem to subscribe to “a less constrained concept”, according to which participation includes those public involvement activities in which members of the concerned public at least give their opinions on an issue (also known as consultation). “Higher levels” of participation involve the public directly in the decision-making process. By contrast, only informing the public on an issue or about a decision would not qualify as participation for most authors.

This view was also espoused by an EC-sponsored informal working group “dedicated to the issues of public participation of the Water Framework Directive” and subsequently endorsed by the water directors of the European Union (Guidance 2002).

However, if this definition signposts which activities to consider participatory and which not, it does not yet tell when - in practice – a participatory activity is effective and when not.

The question of what constitutes effective (i.e. successful, valuable, quality) participation is central in the literature but also to AS and NW. There is no universally agreed answer. But many useful criteria for assessing effective participation have been proposed and a few have been rigorously tested and successfully used in evaluations.

These criteria are usually related to “context”, “processes” and/ or “outcomes”.

2. Evaluation of context

By definition context factors are those that sponsors or participants cannot easily control or influence – at least not at the outset when a process starts. It is the situation one begins with.

NW requires to describe the political, institutional and historical background for participation processes in the river basins, and AS demands to analyse “institutional arrangements” - for good reason because even though many authors don't discuss context as influencing the potential success of participatory processes, those authors that do (e.g. Nelkin and Pollak 1979; Delli Priscoli and Creighton 1983; Ashford and Rest 1999; Beierle and Konisky 2000; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Schuett, Selin and Carr 2001; Rower and Frewer 2004) agree that context can influence the effectiveness of a public involvement process.

... [P]ublic participation efforts occur within, and can be affected by ... a host of historical, social, economic, and political factors The pre-existing infra-structure (e.g. existing grassroots groups) and dynamics of the community can be particularly important for public participation processes. ... Clearly the level of community outrage, anger, and conflict can have an effect, as can the community's level of civic involvement and prior experience with government and public participation activities (Ashford/ Rest 1999, VII-8).

But if context matters, what are the relevant context factors or variables, which influence do they have, and how can they be measured?

2.1. The relevant context factors

After their comprehensive literature review, Rowe and Frewer (2004, 549) summarize the current research situation: “[T]here is ... no accepted and widely used typology” for what “the most important contextual variables affecting participation effectiveness might be...”.

Nevertheless, Beierle and Konisky (2000) compiled a rather wide-ranging list of “context attributes”. These attributes emerged from a literature study that focused much on participatory processes in the Great Lakes Region in North America - considering exclusively environmental problems. However, even though that literature review is region and topic specific, the author of this paper believes that the mentioned criteria deserve to be used for processes that deal with other topics and in other areas as well, because Beierle and Konisky’s criteria are also reflected in the other research literature on context.

Thus, in the following table, some of the original wording of Beierle and Konisky was changed in order to render the criteria more general and also to shorten the original text.

Table 1: Context factors

Name of factor	Hypothesis – The following context factors will help the process to be successful
Atmosphere	The quality of relationships between participants is good
Conflicts of interest	There is little pre-existing conflict between goals
Attitude towards lead agency	The attitude of participants towards the lead agency of the process are positive
Interest in issue	Participants care about solving the problem
Confidence in process	Participants are confident that the selected process will help resolve the problem
Number of problems	There are only a few problems to be addressed
Scientific understanding	The technical problems of the problem are well understood [though this can also happen during the process – YvK]
Shared jurisdiction	Jurisdiction over the problem is not shared or contested by different states or countries [or agencies - YvK]
Geographic complexity	The problem area is a small city or rural area rather than a large metropolis

2.2. The influence of context factors

Though there is agreement that context factors (might) matter, there is no clarity which factor matters how much. To shed some light on this, Beierle and Konisky (2000) listed the mentioned factors (approximately those in Table 2) together with a number of relevant process factors that they also derived from the literature. They then correlated the existence of these factors in 29 cases of participatory processes in the Great Lake Region in North America to the achievement of three social goals (public values are integrated into decision-making, conflicts among competing interests get resolved, and trust in public agencies is restored).

They found that the three factors that correlated the highest with the achievement of all three social goals were three process factors but no context factor. The fourth that highly correlated was a context factor, namely shared jurisdiction. Therefore the authors conclude that “the process of participation appeared to be more important than the context in which participation took place. ... Except for the issue of shared jurisdiction, contextual issues were less related to success. ... This suggests that participation can be successful in a variety of contexts.” (2000, 598)

And yet, this does not mean that the issue of context can be dismissed for evaluation:

It has to be recognized that if the stakes are too high, the alternatives too limited, or antagonisms too engrained, public involvement is unlikely to resolve the problem ... An evaluator who considers public involvement a failure because it cannot cope with a situation like this, does a great disservice. Even voting, the most universally accepted method of citizen participation, was incapable of resolving the issue of slavery in America. Yet we continue to accept the general validity of voting as a method of conflict resolution. (Delli Priscoli and Creighton 1983, 429)

In other words: Context often does not matter so much but in specific situations it might explain a lot. Therefore, it has to be systematically studied in each case.

2.3. The method to evaluate context

How to measure context systematically? As mentioned before, no real agreement on criteria exists, and certainly no tested measurement instrument. What exists however, is a catalogue of potentially important criteria (Table 1) and the suspicion that they might all become important for the success of a participatory process under specific circumstances.

To proceed in practice, it will be necessary for the evaluator to gain a good understanding of the context by systematically interviewing those involved in the process – sponsors and stakeholders – about the given context criteria. More on the required interview guidelines will be discussed in Section V.

3. Evaluation of process

When policy makers involve the public to improve decisions (or for any other reason), they normally have to select representatives, distribute invitations, formulate thematic frameworks, organize discussions, facilitate goal-setting, transmit knowledge, and sometimes encourage decisions and evaluations to be made. In public participation jargon these steps constitute “the process”.

For many authors a good process is essential for effective public involvement activities. So they have proposed elements (criteria) whose presence would constitute an effective process.

3.1. Reasons for evaluating processes

Arguments given for evaluating the process are:

- *An effective process is a goal in itself.* Delli Priscoli and Creighton (1983, 423), for example, argue: “The idea that public involvement is an all-inclusive self-evident and democratic faith that has found expression from Pericles to J.S. Mill ... An evaluation that fails to come to grips with the fact that public involvement is at least in part an act of faith in the values of democracy, will do an injustice to our democratic ideology.”
- *Quality processes are likely to produce quality results.* Rowe and Frewer (2004, 520) formulate carefully: “... it would seem more likely that decision makers will ignore the recommendations of an exercise ... if they perceive it to have been poorly run (e.g., with unrepresentative participants), than if they perceive it to have been well run...”

- *It is quicker, easier, and therefore more practical to evaluate processes.* To again quote Rowe/ Frewer (2004, 520): “[Outcomes] may be difficult to ascertain in a timely manner, and outcomes may to some extent also be due to other variables, such as the occurrence of simultaneous events or externally mediated pressures influencing policy processes ... “

3.2. The relevant process criteria

Yet, what are the criteria for a “good” process? Of the many criteria proposed in the literature reviewed here, only the following few have had the benefit of rigorous inductive or deductive reasoning:

Webler (1995 cited after Webler and Tuler 2001, 29) bases his views on the theories of J. Habermas and argues that a participatory “discourse” should be “fair” and “competent”. Fairness exists when people are provided equal opportunities:

- to determine the agenda,
- to decide on the rules for discourse,
- to speak and raise questions,
- to access knowledge and interpretations

Competence is qualified as “psychological heuristics, listening and communication skills, self-reflection, and consensus building” (cited after Boyce 2004).

Schuett, Selin and Carr (2001) categorized responses from 276 returned questionnaires from participants in 30 different “collaborative initiatives”. They conclude that the “keys to successful collaboration” are “development” (sound preparation and early clarification of roles and goals), “information exchange” (progress updates, access to scientific information), “organizational support” (resources contributed from sponsors but also community interest), “personal communication” (listening attitude of participants, consensus on decision-making process), “relationships/ teambuilding” (open, trusting atmosphere) and “accomplishments” (getting things done).

Beierle and Konisky (2000) after studying the achievements of goals in 29 public involvement cases conclude that among seven proposed process elements “the quality of the deliberative process”, “the quality of communication with government” and “the commitment of the lead agency” correlate the highest with the achievement of goals.

All these criteria are useful, as they point towards which elements make up effective processes. Their disadvantage: To the knowledge of the author, they have not been operationalized yet, or, in other words, turned into measurement instruments that have been tested for reliability and validity.

This is different with the work of Frewer, Rowe, Marsh and Reynolds (2001, 4). After extensive discussions of the literature they have proposed nine criteria for effective processes. The importance of the criteria has been validated (for details see Rowe, Marsh and Frewer 2001, 5). They are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Criteria for effective processes

Name of criterion	Description
Resource Accessibility	Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief
Task Definition	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined

Structured Decision Making	The participation exercise should use/ provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision making
Cost Effectiveness	The procedure should in some sense be cost effective from the point of view of the sponsors
Representativeness	The participants in the exercise should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population
Independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way
Early Involvement	The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgements become salient/relevant
Influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy
Transparency	The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made

3.3. The method for evaluation

Frewer et al. have also turned the criteria into three measurement instruments – a long and a short questionnaire and a checklist – called “the toolkit”. These instruments have been subject to reliability and validity tests (details are given in Rowe, Marsh and Frewer 2001).

The toolkit is freely available and will be proposed in Section V as one essential element for evaluation of participatory processes in AS and NW.

Beside the question of process effectiveness that can be assessed with the toolkit, it will be necessary to get some more background information on processes (who are participants, what kind of events took place etc.). This information can be obtained by relying on already developed questions from the baseline and also the Stakeholder Involvement Protocol. It will be necessary to add these questions to the interview guidelines mentioned in the previous section. Practical implications will be discussed in Section V.

4. Evaluation of outcomes

Outcome evaluation has been profoundly rooted in social science research for many decades (see Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey 1999, 11). With regard to evaluating public participation specific reasons for doing outcome research have been mentioned.

4.1. Reasons for evaluating outcomes

AS and NW require participants to evaluate certain outcomes (such as learning or side effects). Besides, the requirement to evaluate the effectiveness of participatory processes necessitates outcome research. The latter point is emphasized in the literature:

Delli Priscoli and Creighton (1983) warn that “many citizens will not consider public involvement to be effective unless they ‘win’ on the substantive issue. Efforts to evaluate ... must take into account that a program might be ‘perfect’ from a process standpoint, but still fails to impress citizens who did not accept the outcome of the process.”

And Schuett, Selin and Carr (2001, 590) report that their 276 respondents mentioned various process aspects as “keys to successful collaboration” but they continue: “All respondents were outcome-oriented with a desire for some specific achievement to occur from the collaborative initiative.”

4.2. Ways to evaluate outcome

Two main questions that Rosener asked in 1978 have remained relevant with regard to participatory activities:

1. Which (and whose!) outcomes should be evaluated?
2. How will it be known that the outcomes are caused by the participation activity that is evaluated and not by something else?

One question needs to be added:

3. How can the outcomes be measured?

In the past, it was often the sponsoring agencies who defined the outcome evaluation criteria – often according to their own interests and disregarding those of the process participants (Syme and Sadler 1994, 532; Beierle 1999, 14). As this is clearly unsatisfactory to the latter, Syme and Sadler (1994, 531), writing from combined researcher/ practitioner perspectives recommend “a partnership process between the planner, researcher, and the public.”

Also Rosener demands that “there would have to be agreement on goals and objectives, and an indication of whose goals and objectives they were. There would also have to be fairly competent knowledge of a cause and effect relationship between some specified participation program ... and the achievement of the agreed upon goals and objectives ... (1978, 460)”

Lynn and Busenberg who reviewed 14 evaluation studies of citizen advisory committees (CACs) suggest “evaluators, decision makers and citizen users [work] together to make explicit the goals of a CAC as well as the assumptions about the linkages and activities necessary for the accomplishment of goals. This approach also entails agreement on what constitute valid indicators of program success, as well as valid and reliable methods of data collection and effective methods for data presentation.” (1995, 160).

As there is no set of agreed questions or an operationalized and validated toolkit for assessing the outcome of participatory processes the suggestions of Syme and Sadler (1994), Rosener (1978) and Lynn and Busenberg (1995) can serve as practical guidelines for measurement of outcome in AS and NW.

The practical implications of this will be discussed in the following section.

V. Practical consequences for evaluation of participatory methods in AS and NW

This section will suggest practical steps to use measurement instruments derived from the literature. For doing this, the following points remain paramount:

- The evaluation requirements of AS and NW need to be met
- Partners should learn from the feedback they receive
- The evaluation workload for site partners has to be kept as small as possible
- Any limitations in the measuring instruments (e.g. in validity or reliability) will have to be clearly acknowledged

1. Evaluation instruments for context

A catalogue of context criteria has been proposed based on the systematic literature review of Beierle and Konisky (2000). Similar context criteria have been proposed by other authors and these authors agree that context can potentially strongly influence the success of any public involvement activity.

This relevance of context strongly suggests to systematically include context factors into the evaluation instruments of AS and NW. Some corresponding questions exist already in the NW baseline description report. Additional context criteria are provided in Table 1 (above) and should be used for evaluation in both projects even if the criteria have not been validated for general use yet.

So far, no tested measurement instrument, derived from the mentioned criteria seems to exist. Hence, in order to use the criteria and turn them into a measurement instrument, the following steps for evaluation are proposed:

- i. Validate the criteria in Table 1
- ii. Turn the validated criteria into an interview guideline (in other words a checklist for conducting semi-structured interviews)
- iii. Validate this measurement instrument
- iv. Use the validated checklist during the general assemblies of AS and NW

The last point is important for reducing the reporting requirements of the project partners. Previously, the Stakeholder Protocol (developed for NW) demanded written reports. This requirement would now have to be changed.

The questions developed should also take into account the specific evaluation needs of NW and AS if they are not covered by the mentioned context criteria – e.g. “Barriers and bridges to effective communication and cooperation in collaborative research and policy formulation for river basin management”.

2. Evaluation instruments for process

For evaluating process, a set of tested instrument exists with the toolkit of Rowe et al (2001). The toolkit comprises a long and a short questionnaire as well as an evaluation checklist. All three tools measure the same nine process criteria (provided in Table 2).

The suggestion here is to administer the short questionnaires towards the end of June 2006 in the test sites of both projects. By that time, local groups and public involvement processes will be in place and in the case of AS, first recommendations for options should have come out of these groups. In the case of NW, research needs should have been identified.

The questionnaire would at that point provide guidance to all site partners to what extent their participatory processes are seen as effective and what elements need adjustment.

The exact handling of the questionnaires should be closely coordinated in each test site with the evaluators of WPs 5.1 (AS) and 3.1 (NW) for issues of exact wording of questions, groups to distribute the questionnaire to and ways of distributing and recovering questionnaires.

Another round either with the short or long questionnaire should happen towards the end of the two projects. At this point it will be also advisable to use the criteria checklist of the toolkit for a more thorough understanding of the processes. The checklist will be used in the form of

interviews to be conducted by evaluators with organizers and stakeholders probably during the final General Assemblies of the two projects.

It needs to be remembered, however, that the toolkit only evaluates the effectiveness of the processes. Other process evaluation requirements – especially for NW (for example the description of key stakeholder interaction events) – require the use of the previously developed stakeholder involvement protocol. This will also provide answers to the required points:

- Sequences of interaction with stakeholders
- Key interaction events along the process
- The role of stakeholders and their relations

To minimize the workload of site partners, the pertinent questions will not be asked – as hitherto planned – as a reporting requirement but during general assemblies as also planned for the evaluation of context criteria.

3. Evaluation instruments for outcomes

As described above some outcomes have been stipulated by the projects themselves. Other outcomes will have to be developed locally in the sites. This requires different evaluation approaches.

3.1. Project-wide suggested outcomes

Only a few possible outcomes have been defined for public involvement activities in AS and NW. These are:

- Perceptions developed
- Appropriation by stakeholders of research (results and/ or dynamics) and of tools designed
- Side-effects
- Learning about public involvement in water management

The first mentioned objective can be evaluated with the help of a question in the baseline description report that asks about stakeholder perceptions regarding effective water management systems (see Footnote 2). It would then be necessary to ask the same question at the end of the project.

Furthermore, it should be possible to assess the appropriation of research and tools and - one can add for AS – of policy or other recommendations by simply comparing outputs with actual uses. For this it would, however, be necessary to define what “use” means or to describe the use in sufficient detail – e.g. use by whom, how often, and in which context. These questions, of course, need to be asked towards the end of the projects.

Side-effect research can be far reaching and exceed the time-frame of AS and NW. But even within the project timeframe, a study of side-effects for each case study would exceed the resources of WPs 5.1 and 3.1 respectively. An alternative, however, would be that each case study identifies possible side effects of their work and develops approaches to evaluate them as they should do for their other locally developed outcomes.

3.2. “Locally” suggested outcomes

Contrary to project-wide set objectives, more specific outcomes will develop in the case study sites. To evaluate to what extent these goals have been reached the following steps are necessary (in line with above mentioned recommendations from the literature):

- i. Desired outcomes have to be defined for each site – and it might be useful to categorize them on the levels of output, use, impact or learning as described above. Following the research suggestions made in the literature, outcomes should be agreed among case study partners and stakeholders. Evaluators will later – in interviews during general assemblies – assess the circumstances in which outcomes were fixed and whose outcomes they represent.
- ii. Indicators for achievement need to be set also in agreement between site partners and stakeholders. Evaluators will work as outlined in the preceding point.
- iii. The assumptions about cause and effect relationships have to be made explicit for the stipulated objectives for each site.
- iv. Methods for data collection and presentations have to be clarified between site partners and stakeholders. This involves issues of who collects which data with which method, how to ensure reliability and validity, and who presents the results. The set up mechanisms will then be traced by evaluators (also during general assemblies).

VI. Conclusion

This paper has made clear that in order to evaluate the use and effects of participatory methods in AS and NW it is:

- possible and beneficial to combine an evaluation approach for both projects
- necessary to look at context, process and outcomes
- possible to use a tested tool for evaluating the effectiveness of processes
- required for each site to define their own outcomes and corresponding tracing mechanisms
- appropriate to combine various previously developed instruments (namely from the NW baseline description report and the stakeholder protocol) with new questions (e.g. about context) into a new interview guide.

This interview guide will be used by evaluators during general assemblies to clarify aspects of context, process and outcomes. It is hoped that in this way the evaluation workload for case study sites will be reduced.

For the evaluators this means the following practical work steps:

1. Validate the interview guide
2. Propose the new evaluation framework at the next general assemblies
3. Discuss the evaluation framework with the partners
4. Start to use the (possibly modified) framework as soon as possible

For the partners this means

1. Understand and discuss the new framework
2. Use the eventually (possibly modified) framework as agreed

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