

Part 2 of WaterCoG Evaluation: reflection on pilot processes in Sweden - Summary of results -

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Background of Document

The NSR Interreg VB project WaterCoG wants to provide evidence if and how the co-governance, and in particular as implemented in our pilots, contribute to the aims we defined in the proposal:

1. Increase the understanding of ecosystem services
2. Develop new solutions for achieving management targets for water related ecosystem services (as defined by EU directives)
3. Improve the integration of different EU directives
4. Provide additional social, economic and environmental benefits not currently being realised under existing governance frameworks
5. Provide a framework for extending the best practice developed in the project to areas outside of the immediate pilot areas.

For this, WaterCoG evaluates its activities in two parts. First, the project's result indicators aim to quantify how the pilots' impact on improving the ecosystem status, the stakeholders' commitment and on increasing the available resources for water management. Second, all partners would like to reflect in more depth on the processes to better learn on how to improve their participatory and co-governance processes, and in which context to best benefit from them. As the coordinator of WP6 (Evidence and Evaluation), the OOWV has contracted Interessen Im Fluss to coordinate and implement this reflection, including local support as required, and a synthesis of the results. Together with the partners, part 2 of the evaluation has been developed, and implemented in country wise processes, adapted to the needs of the local partners. The author has been hired by the Swedish WaterCoG partners SWAM as a "Swedish local researcher" to evaluate the project including all four Swedish pilots and implement the 2nd part of Swedish evaluation, and support the synthesis from her perspective, but also to do a review over participate methods used by County Administrative Boards in Sweden.

The overall guiding questions of the evaluation are **"What needs to change to make co-governance better work?"** or **"What are the strengths and limitations to co-governance, shown in the different pilots?"**

In this document, the results of the pilots in Sweden are presented.

Two former main drafts have been prepared before this final version was completed. The last draft was prepared for the discussion with the WaterCoG partners and was presented at the WP6 evaluation workshop on 18th June 2019 in Copenhagen where the results of all evaluation processes were presented and discussed with the WaterCoG Consortium. An earlier draft of the report has been circulated among WaterCoG working group including officials from The Skagerrak & Kattegat Water District Authority (SKWDA) and Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWaM) the 7th of May and 2nd of June 2019.



For the busy reader: Lessons Learnt and Recommendations for strengthening co-governance processes in water management

This chapter provides an outlook and a summary of the results chapter at the end of the document focusing on improving the co-governance process, which is, to be correct, a lower level of participation called *active involvement*, in the Swedish case. In Sweden Water Councils has started up, but they don't have any mandate to make decisions about water management and they aren't responsible for making measures or for decision outcomes. The work in the Water Councils is based on the actors' voluntariness. Even though, to be stringent, the same headings have been used as in the other country reports.

This including part provide the central messages of the evaluation process to the "busy reader". More details can be found in the remainder of the document.

The way of working with different types of tools and a supporting co-ordinator have been successful. Participation tools have helped the participation process to result in encouraging and emancipating dialogs and empower both individuals, and the group. However, the involved partners have raised important challenges to the participation process to work properly, which are mentioned below.

- **Knowledge and the ability to understand new knowledge are of wide variation.** Participation tools can enable stakeholders to increase exchange of knowledge between the stakeholders, but also to transfer knowledge from other actors outside the Water Council. With those tools they got both a more holistic understanding and deepened their knowledge of the water catchment area and its actors in terms of history, processes, perspectives, water and ecosystem issues and activities.
 - **Recommendation 1:** To improve the knowledge base it is important to combine different tools and integrate complicated facts with practical and visual elements moments, and to sum up the activities for each part in a document with less text and many pictures.
- **Participation tools can strengthen the democratic process within the Water Council.** To avoid or decrease one-sided processes taking place, and handle potential conflicts when diverse interests are trying to solve complex problems, as water issues can be, there are tools especially designed to get all people to have a say, respect others perspectives and to reflect upon what is said. The experience of those involved is mainly positive.
 - **Recommendation1:** To use a facilitator with knowledge about participating tools.
 - **Recommendation 2:** To use a diverse setup of tools to provide different ways of learning, and alternate individual, small group, and plenary processes, and to sum up all ideas and the process in a document to be a base for forthcoming processes. The latter helps to get a trust building transparent process, which is known to constitute a base to reach good public dialog and participating process (Senecah, 2004)¹.

¹ Senecah, Susan. L. (2004) The trinity of Voice: The role of practical theory planning and evaluating the effectiveness of environmental participatory processes. In Stephen P. Depoe, John W. Delicath och Marie-France Aepli Elsenbeer (ed). *Communication and public participation in environmental decision making* (s 13-33). Albany. State University of New York Press.



- **Recommendation 3:** To produce and use a communication plan.
- **The lack of the continuity of key persons is the reality.** As a result of that key persons are changing, there is a risk with slowing down the process and a lack of communication. The reason for that is that even if the commitment is connected to organisations it is often one person's responsibility to handle activities and communications, which make the system vulnerable.
 - **Recommendation 1:** To build robust platforms for formalised continuous meetings with a steadiness of representatives from different stakeholders, to cope with the lack of continuity of key persons and to continue the process. One option is a formalised water group which assembled key-persons working with water issues within the municipality organisation, as for example Falkenberg municipality does. The group has a link to the Water Councils through their representatives. This way of working may inspire other authorities to find ways of working with water issues and include the Water Councils in their work to exchange local knowledge and knowledge about water issues. To get those authorities' groups connecting with NGOs and other actors the Water Councils seems to be the natural platform.
 - **Recommendation 2:** To avoid misunderstandings and mistrust there is a need for transparency and continuing communication. While using the tools mentioned below together with a continuity of summing up the process and the outcome of the process, and use those as a base for the forthcoming work, and making the documentation available for new members can help the continuity of knowledge and communication. On top of that produce and use a communication plan.
- **The lack of continuity of rules and funding.** When it comes to lack of continuity of rules and funding, the quick changes make actors not capable of adapting to the new situation.
 - **Recommendation 1:** To simplify the process for both Water Councils and the authorities, it would be preferable to have more long-term rules and funding process.
 - **Recommendation 2:** To raise the basic funding to each Water Council to be used for measures or other types of water related issues.
- **The work with water management and other water issues is time consuming and complex.** There is a need for a knowledgeable supporting co-ordinator to deal with things such as applying for grants, working with measures, calling for meetings, making summaries of meetings, leading the participation processes to get the interests involved and the work to reach a democratic process.
 - **Recommendation 1:** To find solid solutions to engage a supporting co-ordinating officer with a long-term perspective, such as a municipality deposit to cover the expenses. That can emancipate someone to be able to apply for funding to make for example measures for the common good.
- **The lack of taking the Water Council seriously by the authorities when it comes to important cases in the reality, even if the Water Councils are said to be important.** The Water District



Authority is financing Water Councils for handling water issues, but even though, they are not always taken seriously. Several incidents have been reported where the authorities haven't referred to the Water Councils for consideration when important environmental hazards have been reported. Another topic coming up is that not every authority always follows the WFD or the Swedish legislation.

- **Recommendation 1:** To clarify the mandate and the role of the Water Councils.
 - **Recommendation 2:** To increase the resources to the Water Councils to be able to make a difference. While it can be a problem with project money with sometimes delayed payment and quick account, a possibility could be to give them a higher amount of money to be divided by the Water Council themselves.
 - **Recommendation 3:** To take better advantage of the Water Councils' collected knowledge about the local context and water issues, with its wide representation from the society and as a neutral platform. They provide a platform for authorities and locals to exchange knowledge, and to invite other local networks. There are many ways to take better advantage of the Water Council's knowledge and perspective. One way is to involve them early in the decision-making processes when water issue is relevant at the municipality and county level. The Water Councils should also be used to a greater extent as a body to which a proposed measure connected to water issues is submitted for consideration, and used as referee by the Land and environment court as well.
 - **Recommendation 4:** There is a need to allocate time not just for Water Council meetings, but also for the work between meetings.
 - **Recommendation 5:** To offer the *Land and environmental court* a course especially angled towards bridging the knowledge gaps.
 - **Recommendation 6:** To produce and use a communication plan including when to communicate with the WC.
- **The public procurements are a problem in the Swedish context.** The implications in this project have been twofold. It delayed the process while it was an aggravating circumstance in the employee process for experts to enter the project, and it also made it more difficult and, in some cases, not able to implement measures in the pilots even if the financial situation allowed it. As projects are limited in time it doesn't work hand-in-hand with time-consuming public procurements.
- **Recommendation 1:** To find quicker solutions for employing experts in projects.
 - **Recommendation 2:** Make it possible for using the people already involved who are familiar with the project and its members for extension, such as extension of the project or follow up projects.
 - **Recommendation 3:** To make it possible to implement measures when actually having financing, but limitations in time.



Data and methods in the Swedish evaluation process

The evaluation is based on a concept developed by the WaterCoG partners as well as the local researchers. The concepts allow for comparing the processes in the different countries, and to identify drivers in particular for their pilots on how to improve the participation when it comes to water issues.

The evaluation process in the different countries was adapted to the needs and interests of the different WaterCoG partners so that the local researchers had the option to combine interviews, workshops, and information provided by WaterCoG partners². The Swedish case involve four pilots in three Water Councils; Mölndalsån's, Himleån's and Ätran's Water Council. The latter Water Council started up two working groups which serve as pilots in the WaterCoG project, Högvadsån and Vartofta, during the WaterCoG project. All those three Water Councils are all parts of the same Water District, Skagerrak & Kattegat Water District, cover two Counties (Västra Götaland and Halland). To evaluate those pilots, with politicians and officials from thirteen different municipalities, and added to that twenty-nine different interests having different representatives in the different municipalities and the two Counties in four different pilots, a workshop-based evaluation adapted for each pilot was used as the main evaluation method (see Appendix E). The questions and the design of the evaluation workshops were produced by the researcher and the facilitator at the workshops. During those workshop-based evaluations one facilitator asked questions and the researcher observed and documented the process, just occasionally the researcher asked questions or answered questions to clarify the questions or the answers. Some few interviews to clarify the workshop efficient were added. On top of that, observation was done at another workshop which did, in contrast to the evaluation workshops, not cover all the issues interesting for this study. Some other meetings and river walks were also used as collecting interesting data to understand the process. At one of the latter meetings there were time earmarked for some evaluation questions. During all those activities there were twenty-one specified interests (see Appendix A) connected to the pilots attending altogether and added to that some participants did not noted any specific interest.

- *Observation of 5 workshops; of which:*
 - o *1 evaluation workshop was with a mixed group with representatives from 2 authorities³, 1 Water Council, and one facilitator (participatory observation (Bernard, 1995⁴) (see Appendix C); and*
 - o *4 evaluation workshops with the pilots especially designed to answer the project questions (see Appendix E) (the goal as observer has been to participate without disturbing or influence the process, so called unstructured observation Jones and Somekh, 2008)⁵ or reactive observation (Bernard, 1995)⁶, with some few additional question*

² For more information see: "Part 2 of WaterCoG Evaluation: reflection on pilot processes. Outline of process and issues. December 2019."

³ The Skagerrak and Kattegat Water District Authority (SKWDA), and Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWaM).

⁴ Bernard H. Russell (1995, 2nd ed.): *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage Publications, Inc.London. P 136-165.

⁵ Jones L. and B. Somekh (2008 6:e uppl.): *Observation*. In *Research methods in the social sciences*. Ed. Somekh B. and Lewin C. SAGE Publications LTD. London.

⁶ Bernard H. Russell (1995, 2nd ed.): *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage Publications, Inc.London.



during the evaluation part to clarify from the researcher), one with each pilot which lasted between 2,25 hours (Mölnaldalsån's Water Council (13 persons) and 3 hours (Himleån's (6 persons) and Ätran's Water Council's two pilots Högvadsån (12 persons) and Vartofta (8 persons). For the summary of the results see Appendix G and for the summary of their process see Appendix F))

- Observation (unstructured) of 3 meetings with local partners. Two of them were committee meeting (Ätran's Water Council 3, 5 hours (15 persons) with an additional part for evaluation (see Appendix B) and Mölnaldal's Water Council 1,25 hours (13 persons)). The third was a yearly meeting for all Water Councils in the Skagerrak and Kattegat Water District. (7,5 hours, ca 102 persons).
- Observation (participatory) of 2 river walks, 1 hour (1 nature guide and 1 politician from Mölnaldalsån's Water Council), 2,5 hours (Högvadsån, 15 persons from the pilot).
- 2 semi structured interviews (see Appendix D) and 1 unstructured interview with actors in the Water Councils.



What needs to change for providing better water co-governance approaches? - Results section

Three themes of central interest to the WaterCoG partnership were identified by the evaluation team to answer this question.

- The role of knowledge and tools in co-governance processes
- The connection of governance levels in co-governance processes
- Process facilitation

The section presents the insights and lessons learnt from the four Swedish pilot processes.

The role of Knowledge and Tools in co-governance processes: How can it be (more) relevant for the decision –making processes?

What is noticeable in this study, but also in other studies working with a broad range of stakeholders including local politicians, is that there is a very wide variation in terms of knowledge level and the ability to understand new knowledge (Boholm, Prutzer and Bendz, 2015⁷; Morf and Prutzer, forthc.)⁸. This is the reality in practice and it has to be dealt with when working at the local level. To get more stakeholders to gain more knowledge about water issues and different perspectives some of the tools for participation have been especially highlighted:

- *River walk*: Water Council stakeholders either go by themselves in the catchment area or together with experts or citizens and explore, discover, experience and discuss (David L. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in practice ⁹) the water issues connected to the area they visit and share knowledge about different interests and issues. Can also be used individually during a *land owner visit*.
- *Maps over the catchment area as a base for conversations*, e.g. about values and water connected problems in the area. It gives a holistic view over the catchment area or parts of it.
- *Lectures*; preferably with lots of pictures and less texts and not too lengthy.
- *Study visit*; to visit someone, such as another Water Council member, who has done measures, and has the possibility to see and talk about it is mentioned as fruitful.
- *To meet each other and talk*; "It is in the conversations you sort things out".
- *Listen and tell each other two and two*.
- *The Swedish "fika"*, which is a coffee/tea break with something to it (cookie, buns etc), is an important tradition connected to ordinary meetings. It enables a dialog processes in a relaxed form while it gives possibilities to ask and communicate whatever you want to with anyone attending.

⁷ Boholm Åsa., Prutzer Madeleine and Anna Bendz. (2015): *Drinking water risk management. Municipal challenges: a Swedish case study*. Presentation at SRA Nordic Chapter: The Future of Risk Analysis in the Nordic Countries. Lund, Sweden, 16-17 November 2015 Society for Risk Analysis.

⁸ Morf Andrea and Madeleine Prutzer (forthc.): *Addressing Climate Change in Coastal Areas in Ystad Municipality, South Sweden: a case study of risk perception and management including a practical tool test*. Final report FORMAS project "Impact of Climate Change on Coastal Flooding and Erosion - A tool for improved integrated coastal management", School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg.

⁹ Concrete experience, Reflective observation, Abstract conceptualisation and Active experimentation.
<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/doctoralcollege/training/eresources/teaching/theories/kolb>



- *To use a combination of the different tools* is stated as good by the actors.

The assessment of the role of tools to include new knowledge has been different in the different pilots, but the main role for all of them is to get a better and more holistic understanding of the water issues and the catchment areas. Everyone's knowledge, thoughts and ideas are unique resources. The tools have been helpful to transfer the knowledge, thoughts and ideas within the groups and strengthened the Water Councils work. Some actors referred experienced a changed view on water, and changed reaction and understanding of the processes. One of the landowners put it like this: "Water is much more than just water, with all life living in it. I have got another perspective on it, now it is not just about canals which drain our fields, but it is something else as well – fish and birds." (Landowner, 12th of March 2019) The tools have been a help to exchange the knowledge between the stakeholders, but also to transfer knowledge from actors outside the Water Council. With those tools they got a more holistic understanding and deepened their knowledge of the water catchment area and its actors in terms of history, processes, perspectives, ecosystem issues and activities.

The acceptance and the understandings of the state of the water catchment and the knowledge about what can be done to reach better qualitative and quantitative status according to the Water Frame Directive (WFD) can motivate people to get to the stage where they are willing to act according to a process leader.

Some of the tools are especially designed to get everyone to have a say and to reflect up on what is said, such as card-collection for ideas about a specific question/subject. Here, each participant was asked to put *their thoughts on small pieces of paper, which are sorted and get headings together by the working groups before being presented in plenary*, which has been confirmed in this study. Even if some actors think it is difficult to put their thoughts on a small piece of paper, the methods allow them to tell verbally about their thoughts as a compliment and deepen their understanding. Another comment about the part of the dialog process when the participators have time to think and write things by themselves and verbally explain their thoughts for the others, here referred to as the *individual part*, is that some people can feel uncomfortable presenting their thoughts. However, it might be resolved by performing it in small groups. During observations (spring 2017) it was apparent that some actors were actually not listened to or did not take part in the dialog, when the *individual part* wasn't used. One comment from one of the groups at the end of the project (2019) was that in this constellation they didn't need those methods while they were such a small group with people knowing each other for a long time. This means that at least some actors were not aware that others were excluded when not using the *individual part* in the participatory methods. That highlights the importance of using dialog tools with possibilities to present individually to reach a better knowledge base and in the long run probably better and more supported solutions and measures. A concern that not the best idea is selected while the process was too quick to reflect deeply, was raised. It is important to clarify that lists with ideas resulting from different dialog process tools is meant to be used dynamically and not with one direction forward all the time, but instead reuse the list as a base for the dialogs and to be able to have an iterative process. Another part which is raised about the role of the tools is to develop the internal work, strengthen the network and strengthen the mutual understandings. "*Community of practice*", which is about groups meeting and working together, is



confirmed to encourage connection to the group (Wenger, 2007¹⁰; Lave and Wenger, 1991¹¹) and the landscape (Fine, 2003¹²), and shape a common identity (Lave, 1992¹³), which has been found important in development work, such as working with water issues, to get the dialog within a group work in a good way (Mairals, 2004¹⁴).

Other tools are about helping to together develop a wished and shared so-called *history of the future* for the Water Councils, which can be used as a base for develop common goals, visions and plans in the Water Councils or at the Water Councils' project level. Those tools, such as *own thoughts on small piece of papers which are sorted and get headings together in the working groups in combination with priority of the different alternative, working with a timeline, with the history of the future and vision work (the group together describe their visions)*. But to use those latter tools in a productive way the group should alternate those with developing a common knowledge base about the catchment area and its different actors with different perspectives using tools such as *river walks, using maps over the water drainage area as a base for conversations* and by comparing old with new maps to get a clear picture about the historical changes made in the area, *lectures, study visit, exchange experience with other Water Councils who have made local measures*. The combination of tools can help to make a strong impact on the work. Many of those tools can also support getting an overview over the capability of the Water council for example available internal knowledge and its network, what external knowledge or skills are needed for certain activities, and can give a picture about which parties are concerned.

Tools may also help to broaden the participation in a process. The participating processes can sometimes be too one-sided. It has been mentioned by actors and also observed that when certain people have had their say, nobody says anything against it. Those people make other people keep quiet and the participation process becomes counterproductive. When using methods where more people have a say and their opinions are taken into consideration, it increases the chance that not just people with a high voice, eloquent people or people with a high social position in the society take the scene.

For a complete list of the tools linking to participation and used during the project, see Appendix H.

¹⁰ Wenger, Etienne (1998): *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

¹¹ Lave Jean and Etienne Wenger (1991): *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

¹² Fine, Gary Alan (2003): *Moral tales: The culture of mushrooming*. University of Illinois Press. Urbana och Chicago.

¹³ Lave J (1992): *Learning as Participation in Communities of Practice*.

http://postcog.files.wordpress.com/2007/09/lave_aera_1992.pdf Accessed Juni, 2009

¹⁴ Mairals, Gaspar (2004): *The invention of a minority: A case from the Aragonese Pyrenes*. I Facility siting: Risk, power and identity in land use planning. Av red. Boholm, Åsa och Ragnar E. Löfgren. Earthscan. London.



Connected governance levels in co-governance processes: How was the co-governance process embedded in the overall governance context?

Water management is very broad, consisting of many different parts, for instance safe drinking water, irrigation, biological diversity and water power, and consequently includes many authorities from national level to local level. Two of those authorities have been in the leading position in the Swedish part of WaterCoG, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water management (SWaM), and

Skagerrak and Kattegat Water District Authority (SKWDA). SWaM is responsible for planning and managing marine and fresh water resources at the national level in Sweden, and the roles of SKWDA are to coordinate water management in the water district. The municipalities are responsible for handling the water quality and quantity. The local society includes for example landowners and enterprises implementing measures in practice at the local levels where it's needed. The Swedish model is also partly based on a co-operation together with important organisations representing farmers, forestry and other parts in the society at the national level. When it comes to the management

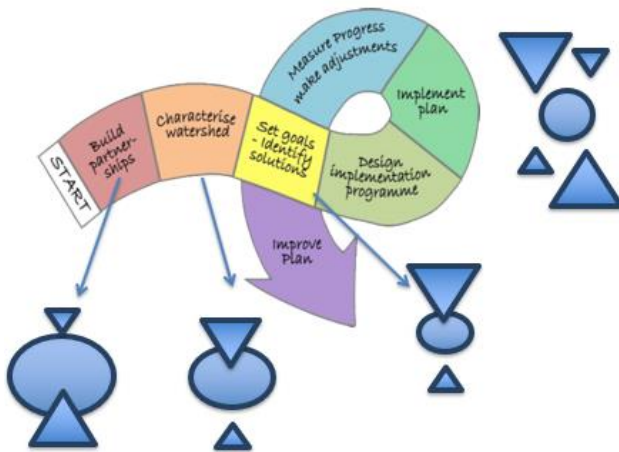


Figure 2: Variation of management processes of water issues in Sweden (Source: WaterCoG (2017): Implementation concept for partners of the WaterCoG project adapted by Peter Nolbrant)

process it differs in different stages of the process (figure 2) and in different types such as measures, goals, action plans and municipality participation. The measurement process can sometimes be a top-down (figure 3) procedure as for example when it comes to environmental assessment for water power. In other cases, the process is instead based on a bottom-up willingness-to-do-measurement together with incentives from the authorities, which make the management process more horizontal (figure 4). In some sense they share goals and responsibilities between those involved in the bottom-up process. Sometimes that can be based on that for example landowners have a wish to contribute to the common good and develop their production in a more sustainable way. It can also be based on that the landowners or other stakeholders assume that it will be forced upon them anyhow by the authorities in the future and if so, it can be more costly in terms of money and other resources.



Figure 3: Top-down management process of water issues in Sweden (Source: WaterCoG (2017): Implementation concept for partners of the WaterCoG project adapted by Peter Nolbrant)



Figure 4: Horizontal management process of water issues in Sweden (Source: WaterCoG (2017): Implementation concept for partners of the WaterCoG project adapted by Peter Nolbrant)

Regarding how the public sector is managed, it has been obvious that the public procurements are a problem in the Swedish context. The implications in this project has been twofold. It has both delayed the process while it was an aggravating circumstance in the employee process for experts to enter the project, and made it also more difficult and in some cases not able to implement measures in the pilots even if the financial situation allowed it. Swedish employment laws have also put restrictions on long term involvement of experts.



The municipality level

The municipality have multiple functions and a variety of directions. This make the connection to the municipality by some means difficult and complex. Three of the pilots (and two of the Water Councils) seems to have a good connection to the environmental department at the municipalities, but in the fourth pilot the link to the municipality is non-existing. The authorities' knowledge among the municipality ecologist officials have been received as highly valued among two of the pilots to help sort things out and explain complex ecosystem-related issues, but also help with taking notes and summarize meetings have been appreciated. The relationship with the technical officials at the municipality level is experienced negative when it comes to water issues due to lack of knowledge and lack of consideration to water basin issues. The political decision parts at the municipality level (municipal council and municipal executive board) are, perceived by the actors in the pilots, to go on with exploitation not paying attention to water catchment issues in a long term and sustainable way working together with the nature. The wish to get into the decision-making process in an early stage is stressed by one of the Water Councils, to be able to influence the decisions, which is not the case today. However, parts of the municipality could perceive the Water Council as hindering their agenda when it comes to the planning process and other activities, which might make them less interested in referring cases to the Water Councils for consideration. Another obstacle accentuated by a politician active in a Water Council is the experience of having more than one role at a time with different contradictory interests. To handle this, one way has been not to be involved with issues in the Water Council connected to the municipality's work, resulting in implications for the Water Councils process.

As mentioned above in some of the pilots, the municipality employee has taken notes and summarized the process, but even if it this part has been helpful, it is also seen as hampering the process twofold when the municipality actors taking the lead while the municipality is responsible for a wide range of activities. First of all, except working for such as better ecological status, and better water quality and water quantity, the municipality is controlling exercise of authority and second it is partly an actor influencing the water while they are responsible for sewage treatment plant and has often interests to expand the town in terms of increasing the number of jobs and inhabitants. One way of not getting loyalty problems for politicians in terms of conflicting interests between the Water Councils and the municipality has been a choice to not attend the meeting during dialogs in the Water Council committee connected to those issues, which in a way makes the idea with the participation process to fail.

The County Administrative Board level

There are twenty-one County Administrative Boards in Sweden representing the national governance at the county level. The pilot with a non-existing relationship with the municipality level, had a connection to the County Administrative Board in the beginning of the project process, but not now. This lack of continuity together with conceived unclear and diffuse recommendations about measures by the authorities' representatives during the river walk made the pilots members feel abandoned by the authorities, which is a matter of mistrust. Another pilot, one of the two with good connections to the environmental department at the municipality had also had a good relation and got the same kind of help as mentioned above before the WaterCoG- project started, from earlier County Administrative Board representatives, but not anymore probably due to the high burden of



work and the need of priority the most important things to do, which is a common situation in Sweden.

Several incidents have been reported where the authorities haven't contacted the Water Councils when important environmental hazards, such as spoil dumps close to water, has been reported or water-rights court is changed to avoid flooding, but instead will increase flooding further down in the catchment area. However, the County Administrative Board is aware of the need for robust platforms for formalised meetings to get a continuation for going on with vertical work. There is an ongoing pilot at County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland with a platform for discussing water and planning issues called *Municipality reference group* with 12 municipalities with one representative per municipality either a politician or a municipal official. One possibility suggested by an authority official is to scale up this work is to do it either within or together with the Water Councils in the future.

The national level

The experience with no continuation of participation, and as result actors felt abandoned, is also mentioned regarding the Swedish Board of Agriculture. Another relevant problem raised by a landowner, process leaders and a fishery actor, which is hampering the WFD to be implemented, is the example with the Swedish Transport Administration, who sometimes lacking knowledge about how to make constructions to provide solutions with good conditions for living species, which do not need to be more costly. In one case, which was raised by actors, the individual landowner went to court to get the Swedish Transport Administration to adapt to the WFD. Even if the landowner did lose the case in the court the Swedish Transport Administration adapted to a solution good for living species as suggested by the landowner.

Other hindrances which have been accentuated are the lack of continuity of rules and laws. When shifting rules and laws especially when it is a quick turn, it makes it difficult for the actors to follow in terms of being updated, and the financial situation during changes sometimes can be costly. Long term processes without too quick changes would be preferable from this perspective. Another way of steering the society is by using different forms of incentives to get things happen. The experience is that those incentives sometimes can be erratic with lack of continuity. One example mentioned is the funding for wetlands in Sweden which after the new budget at the national level in 2018 made by the right winged and the Christian party was decreased by 300 million SEK which resulted in that ongoing projects had to stop and new applications did not get any money. In the beginning of April, 2019, the present Government at the national level did reintroduce most of the money for wetland. The gap when the money for this work was stopped destroyed the ongoing process and made the work inefficient. There are situations when it is the other way around according to a authority official, a huge amount of money is coming from the national level to the County Administrative Board to be used for certain issues or tasks within a certain period at too short notice to be able to use the money in an adequate way, while the capacity and resources are not at place. It takes time to build up competence and to employ enough people to meet the need. To make a smoother and more stable situation for the Water Councils it has been suggested by process leaders, to raise the basic funding to each Water Council to be used for measures or other type of water related issues that the Water Councils work with.



Land and Environmental Court

There are five *Land and environmental Courts* and one *Land and Environmental Court of Appeal* in Sweden. Those courts are specialised in cases concerning environmental and water issues, property registration and planning and building matters among other things. Beside legally trained judges there are technical advisors working at the court. They are not stakeholders in the Water Councils, but is important when it comes to decide a case such as conflicts between different actors. They can also ask the County Administrative Board for advice.

The *Land and environmental court* is said sometimes to lack knowledge and especially climate change connected to water issues are mentioned. Two different cases were mentioned as examples, both in the same county, one of them outside the pilot area. In another county the *Land and environmental court* gave the municipality the right to make measures with the County Administrative Boards approving even though the classification of *Good Status* can be lost as a result of it.

Focus on nutrients

Focus on nutrients is a joint venture between the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the County Administration Boards, the Federation of Swedish Farmers and a number of companies in the farming business with focus on reducing losses of nutrients to air and water from livestock and crop production. One of the pilots felt abandoned by the *Focus on nutrition* while they were not continuing their attendance to the pilot meetings.

Generally, about authorities and other groups

One of the obstacles which has been emphasised is the lack of continuity of key persons and other actors. Those key persons can either be employees at authorities at all levels who change job, other tasks competing with the same time as for the project or water issues, stay home with children etc ; or politicians that just might sit one term of office (four years in Sweden); or NGO-people in the Water councils that also are changed for different reasons. The lack of knowledge among actors have been reported in some cases to slow down the process and made groups in some sense to restart the work when changing actors. Another issue when it comes to change of actors in the process is the lack of continuity of communication. Lack of communication can also be at stake even when there is a continuity of actors, especially under situations of stress or sometimes even deliberately according to stakeholders. In both cases the lack of continuity of communication has somehow slowed down the process and has partly ended up in misunderstandings and mistrust.

The mentioned mistrust matter is twofold; both in the relation to authorities, but sometimes also between different interests. There is a generally mistrust among landowners towards the authorities. Reasons mentioned for that can simply be that they want their autonomy and no involvement of others in questions connected to their land. Another reason told by landowners can be that they want to avoid changes and are satisfied with it as it is. It can also be based on others experience or self-experience about such as being controlled by the authorities, or rules which the professionals consider as irrelevant. When having an actual case, the experience is that the officials at the County Administrative Board sometimes do not listen and do not take any consideration to the practical reality and sometimes that they do not have enough knowledge. Another base for mistrust reported by landowners is that the authorities (both at the municipality, county and national level) do not always fulfil their obligations to attain the goals in the WFD. It also happens that they sometimes give



the consultants they use directives (explicit or implicit) which can lead to improper inventories, and based on that result they may not always make the best decisions.

Another issue raised by landowners, an expert and leaders, is that it sometimes happens that authorities on one hand not themselves following the WFD but on the other hand ask individual landowner to do it. That doesn't give right signals and a trustful relation. There is also a fear among the landowners that they will get rid of their land if for example the values in their landscape are high. Some consider the consequences of what will happen if they work to increase those values. Another practice stated is that in a former time, no explicit report about when, they found for example County Administrative Board and the Swedish Board of Agriculture to be willing to help, but nowadays they consider them niggling with details even though the more important parts are satisfactory. Today they experience that they are chased by the authorities. Another issue raised are actors who are only attending the meetings to look after one's interests, and participations which are more ritualistic in their form, both counterproductive for the participation process (Cooke och Kothari, 2004, 3rd ed.¹⁵). There are differences in the way the authority officials have been mentioned so it seems to be a combination of how the different authorities at different places are organized and how different officials make use of their space. However, together all those mistrust experiences from the actors shape an unsure social interaction in the participation process. The political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2013)¹⁶ argue that the latter generate destructivity in the society. NGOs have the strength to bridge the gap of trust between locals and authorities and that is how Sweden has been organized for a long time with strong NGOs working together with politicians. Some NGOs are not as strong anymore, such as the Federation of Swedish Farmers. In that particular case, one reason is because the number of farmers is decreasing in Sweden. However, there is also a gap of trust between different interests.

A topic which has been exposed by the Water Council members is that the different authorities, including the universities, are not co-ordinated. This results both in overlapping work and fragmented knowledge, as well as in over-use of money. It was suggested to get into a more efficient collaboration between the authorities to avoid overlapping processes, which was also found in a study about risks with safe drinking water production in Sweden (Boholm and Prutzer, 2017)¹⁷.

Process facilitation – What are the strengths and weaknesses?

Important aspects in a facilitation process emphasised at the evaluation workshops with the four pilots are to involve all actors and to let everyone have their say. The facilitators role should be to co-ordinate the process and to have a holistic view. Other things said about the process were to keep the conversations at the meeting effective; keep concise and not allow the participants just not to repeat what others have already said if not to clarify if they have understand it correctly or add something to it; talk understandably; know what they are talking about; and to have time to plan the meetings. To develop the role of a facilitator it was suggested to educate them and a wish by

¹⁵ Cooke, B., och U. Kothari. Eds. (2001): *Participation: The new tyranny?* London and New York: Zed Books.

¹⁶ Mouffe, Chantal (2000): *Wittgenstein, Political Theory and Democracy*. Downloaded 2nd june 2019 <http://them.polylog.org/2/amc-en.htm>

¹⁷ Boholm, Åsa and Madeleine Prutzer (2017): *Experts' understandings of drinking water risk management in a climate change scenario*. In *Climate Risk Management*. 2017: Vol 16. P. 133-144.



someone to increase the knowledge about farming. The latter is an ongoing process within the Water Council among all participators together with increasing knowledge about other water issues.

To be committed to the issues as a leader or at other key positions, it is seen both as something good and important to get the process activities to be alive, but it has also been experienced that the commitment to special issues by some has ended up in that activities haven't been anchored in the group and even stopped the participation process by both hindering meetings and not transparent communication. Insufficient or lack of communication within the Water Council between different interests and between different key persons, but also with actors outside such as authorities or other actors has been identified as an obstacle for the process and the implementation. Even within different stakeholders' organisations' different levels and within and between public organisations it has been seen to hamper the process. However, it is not just the process and implementation which is harmed by insufficient or lack of communication, but an interpretation of power displacement, which is connected to the very important key task, the issue about trust. A transparent communication to avoid this happening is desirable by a wide range of actors.

Taking leadership – what has that meant for the process

In Sweden, the Water Councils have a chairman, elected by the members, leading the meetings but the different projects going on in each Water Councils do not always have an official leader. When asking what it has meant for the process when someone has taken the leadership in such processes it has been stated that it's a requirement to get the process direction ahead and to make it more effective. When it didn't happen that someone took the leadership in the pilots' working groups, it resulted in no meetings at all and just one of the four groups produced something, one roll-up.

In some of the pilots, the ecological official at the municipalities has taken the leadership, and has been seen as a great asset while many of the actors do not have enough time and knowledge about how to handle the process, which was mentioned above. However, another position was at stake as well. Even if it is good that the municipality officials are joining, it can hamper the process a bit if they are in a steering position. From this perspective it is mentioned both from a municipality officer's and landowner's perspectives, that it is better if the Water Councils are more self-governing and independent. The municipality officials haven't been able to assist the Water Councils in the same way during the whole period due to lack of time, and if other projects are starting up on top of that it won't be possible to help all of them according to a municipality official. However, as mentioned above, water issues are complex and time-consuming matters. The need of a knowledgeable supporting co-ordinator serving with things such as apply for grants, call for meetings, make summary of meetings, leading the participation processes to get the interests involved and work to reach a democratic process is helping is emphasised. Three pilots stressed lack of a supporting co-ordinating officer as hindering the process, and the fourth which already have a secretary doing parts of that work would like to expand the tasks.



Appendix

