

Engaging managers, stakeholders and scientists for science-policy integration

Lessons from the in-depth review of social elements and social learning

Sally Priest and Loraine McFadden
Flood Hazard Research Centre





Social learning work and in-depth review of social components

In-depth Review

5 case study sites

Pertuis Charentais, Guadiana,
Taranto, Himmerfjärden, Søndeled

In-depth interviews asking a range of questions

Categories of SAF-related questions:

- An overview on the process of multi-stakeholder dialogue
- CATWOE/DPSIR
- Institutional Mapping
- Conceptual mapping
- Indicators and other quantitative sources of social data
- Formulating and appraising the SAF model
- Scenarios

Social learning

Phase I: 18 months

Survey I – 24 responses collected
from 17 SSAs in Summer 2008

In-depth case study interviews: Cork
Harbour, Izmit Bay, Oder Estuary

Phase 2: 36 months

- Survey II – 23 responses from 15
SSAs in Spring 2010

Repeated case study interviews in
the three case study areas.

There are significant added benefits of having a core group of stakeholders who maintain a regular relationship with research.

SSAs team's work with stakeholders and the inclusion of social components within the SAF model benefited greatly from previous project work and current exchanges within other projects.

Earlier experiences allowed participatory components to be laid and regular exchanges allowed these to be build upon.

Strong impression that running a process of participation as initiated in the design step – parallel to the SAF process – would make the output stage easier to conduct and potentially more fruitful.



Developing regular working relationship over considerable period of time increased learning both among stakeholders and between stakeholders and scientists.

Important impact was that it made the introduction of complex social issues easier.

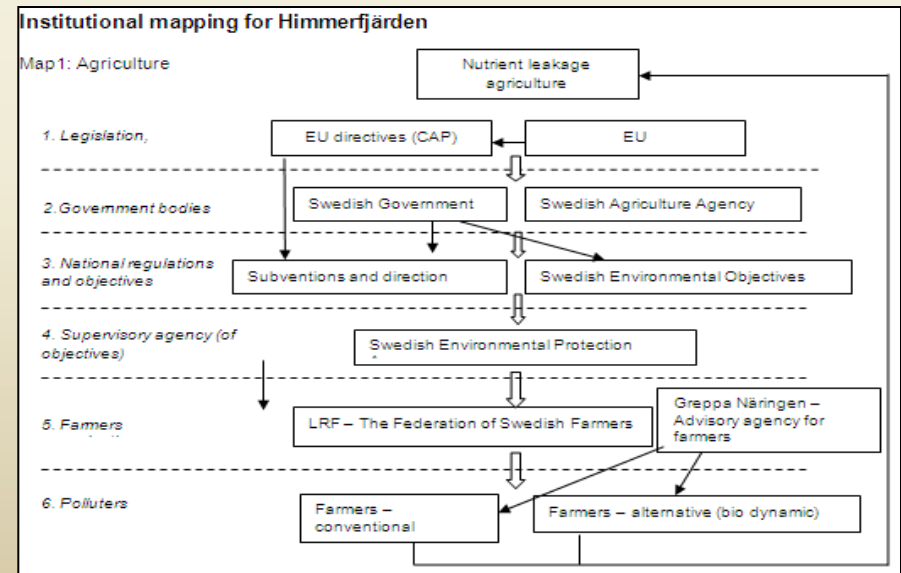
But, there is the need for a balanced approach between developing long-term relationships and ensuring broad and open deliberation



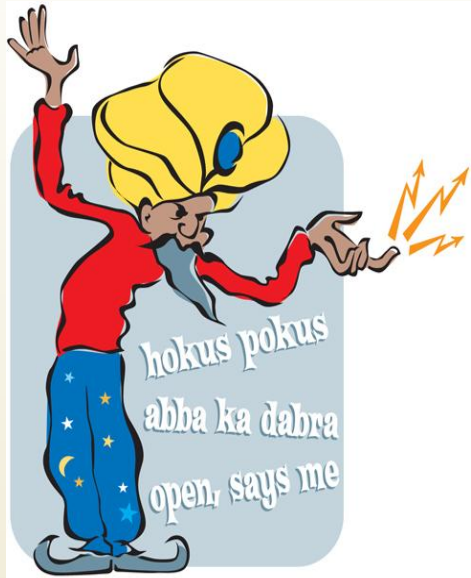
Existing stakeholder groups that scientists have worked with before appear to have a reduced likelihood of changing attitudes and objectives of the management process

No change in attitudes or management objectives in SSAs within existing groups that they have worked with before

- Clearer understanding of stakeholder preferences and opinions
- Indication of the benefit of stakeholder engagement over the longer term



The central role played by perceptions (misconceptions?) of legitimacy in defining the approach to, and use of, social components



Perceived legitimacy is important:

- The scientific champion (individual or organisation) being perceived to be credible by other scientists and by stakeholder organisations
- The voice of different stakeholder groups: are they a credible reflection of interests and knowledge

Perceived legitimacy becoming a barrier to progress?

- Scientists not confident enough to take forward the tools
- Scientists not feeling legitimate enough to organise a multi-stakeholder forum because I don't have relations with some of the groups

Developing long-lasting relationship and trust with stakeholders helps to facilitate social learning opportunities

Scale impacts upon social learning in different ways

Drawing together of stakeholders from different administrative scales



New learning opportunities and broader learning



But different motivations across scales – who is represented?
PR v committed interest



Findings argued that an increased focus better enables social learning



But, full implementation of the SAF involves engagement at different levels, even though some may be more problematic than others.

Being overt about all the reasons for engagement and who else you are engaging with may increase opportunities for social learning.

For effective engagement we need to challenge the notion of experts and non-experts.

Particularly relates to core or reference group of stakeholders
Managers or decision-makers from government departments



Due to training and exchanges which they have already been involved in with researchers: share a closer scientific culture that we may give credit for.



Not debates between experts and laymen but debates of experts.

Groups of experts have different motivations and agendas: but are experts nevertheless

Researchers: construction, recognition and valuation of knowledge

Decision-makers: operational requirements, fast access for precise problems.



Given short time frames: it may not be possible to harness these exchanges as effectively as they could be: however, as much time as possible should be allocated to these discussions.

Selection of the policy issue has an influence on stakeholder engagement and science and policy integration

Stakeholders were more likely to disengage from the process if they were in an existing stakeholder group



Relation to the policy issue: with existing groups established for other or broader purposes would expect that the policy issue might not be of relevance to all

The selection of a policy issue may impact upon the engagement or disengagement of stakeholders by limiting the scope of the SAF process



Need to recognise the stakeholder context of potential policy issues in order to facilitate effective and broad engagement.



The effort given to defining the problem to be explored by the team is absolutely crucial for the development of the social component in terms of the process



Planning and preparation

The lack of an implementation focus was considered to be a significant barrier to engaging stakeholders

The theoretical and methodological nature of SPICOSA was considered to be a clear barrier to engaging stakeholders and encourage them to be involved in a social learning process



'SPICOSA by stealth'



Scientists mentioned that at the beginning of the process they were not comfortable with the SPICOSA process and therefore were not going to introduce it explicitly to their stakeholders

Managing expectations and being clear about what is, or is not possible is important to frame engagement and reinforce the relevance of the process to stakeholders.



Lessons post-SPICOSA



Recognise the inherent problems and limitations of an engagement process is important to building effective dialogue



Managing expectations and clarity of outcomes is important to frame engagement and reinforce the relevance of the process to stakeholders



Full implementation of the SAF requires broad stakeholder engagement



The SAF is a strong platform for improving engagement and dialogue post-SPICOSA