

ENMaR (European Network Of Municipalities and Rivers)

Background:

ENMaR's aim was to help people in local authorities understand the impact of the EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) on their work.

It was recognised that achieving the objectives of the WFD would require the involvement of many stakeholders. One stakeholder group, local authority planners, are particularly crucial and this group was not engaged with water issues. The ENMaR project was created to inform and engage this group with other stakeholders.

Project:

A partnership between five countries established the European project ENMaR to explore water issues. The English partners included the Mersey Basin Campaign and the University of Manchester. ENMaR brought together a network of stakeholders in the Northwest, including many planners, to share an understanding of the impact of the WFD and water issues in the region. The Northwest network operated in parallel with similar networks in the other European partner countries. ENMaR brought benefits through the partnership that the partners could not have achieved alone.

ENMaR created an international network of over 100 municipalities and local authorities in the five partner countries. An ENMaR network of local authorities and other stakeholders was developed in a particular region within each country. The partners enabled the sharing of ideas within each regional network as well as across the European network in relation to the project's core themes: spatial planning, water services, tourism, agriculture and forestry.

ENMaR covered five rivers: the Mersey, the Weser (Germany) the Eman (Sweden), the Gauja (Latvia) and the Mino (Spain).

The ENMaR partners were:

England:

Mersey Basin Campaign
University of Manchester

Germany:

Kommunale Umwelt-Aktion (U.A.N)
Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer-Wasserband (OOWV)

Sweden:

Emaförbundet

Latvia:

Vides Projekti

Spain:

University of Santiago de Compostela

How we did it:

Each country organised a series of workshops to discuss the core themes in relation to the WFD. In addition, three international conferences in Oldenburg (Germany), Lugo (Spain) and Manchester (England) enabled the sharing of ideas across Europe.

The Mersey Basin Campaign built the Northwest ENMaR network of over 250 stakeholders and organised 10 seminars as well as the international conference in Manchester. By the end of the

project, representatives from all 29 of the local authorities that the Mersey or its tributaries flow through had attended the events.

The final output was a book containing 60 case studies from across Europe. The project website is www.enmar.org

Publicity:

The Mersey Basin Campaign's website advertised each event and an ENMaR page on the site held all the presentations from the 11 events. Two e-newsletters were sent to the stakeholders in the Northwest as well as invitations by email to every event. Several national publications featured ENMaR and we gave presentations on the project in the region, nationally and internationally including at events other than ENMaR events.

Project value and funding sources:

Funding of 160,000 Euros was provided by European Interreg IIIc. This included United Utilities contribution, to provide a project manager for the three-year project.

Who was involved?

Mersey Basin Campaign's Policy Advisor - acting as project manager (on secondment from United Utilities)

University of Manchester – project partner leading on spatial planning, research and writing the outputs including the final output, the ENMaR book with 60 case studies.

Lessons learned:

Check the small print – the devil is in the detail with project contracts.

Target your audience – the events were specifically tailored to address the needs of local authority planners and this helped to engage them, which was the aim of the project.

Measure the difference, before and after – A questionnaire at the launch event asked the delegates how much they were aware of the WFD. The very same question was asked at an event two years later and a definite improvement in awareness was clear to see.

Event timing:

Presentations need no more than 15 minutes – Presenters can say what they need to say in that time.

Lots of networking time – Providing ample time for coffee breaks and lunch at events allows for great networking to take place.

Events need no more than half a day – The format of each ENMaR event was successful, a morning ending with lunch being sufficient.

Team effort – Most members of the Campaign staff helped out with ENMaR at some appropriate stage. Team-working with project partners is crucial to success and the regional partnership between the University of Manchester and the Campaign worked particularly well.