

Sediment Management and Stakeholder involvement

Referent: Adriaan Slob¹, Lasse Gerrits², Gerald Jan Ellen¹

¹TNO, Built Environment & Geosciences, PO Box 49, 2600 JA, Delft, The Netherlands Phone: +31-(0)152695446

²Erasmus University Rotterdam, Department of Public Administration, P.O. Box 1738,3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands E-mail: adriaan.slob@tno.nl

Introduction:

Stakeholder involvement will be of increasing importance for environmental policy-making, not only because European Union regulations demand societal participation, but also because of the increasing complexity of environmental policy issues in general. This complexity is caused by the many groups that have a role in environmental problems, the competing interests of stakeholders and the involvement of several policy levels (regional, national and international). When looking at the sediment issue on a river basin scale, the complexity is obvious. There are many stakeholders as well as policy levels that are involved within river basins and the interests of all these groups are quite diverse. This paper will focus on the basic questions concerning stakeholder involvement in the decision-making processes with respect to sediment management and, consequently, on the recommendations that can be derived from this. The Paper is based on chapter 7 of the 4th Sednet Book: *Sediment Management at the River Basin Scale*

Results & Discussion

This paper provides an introduction to the subject of stakeholder involvement with respect to sediment management. The relevant themes are grouped around the basic questions, namely who, what, why and how? Furthermore, the pitfalls of stakeholder involvement are mentioned as the process of stakeholder involvement is not as simple as it may seem at first glance. The need for stakeholder involvement in sediment management issues is a clear one. Dealing with sediment management at the river basin scale is a complex policy issue with a wide variety of different policy levels and stakeholders involved, with different interests and perspectives. Future management of sediment – whether at specific sites or at the river basin scale – will have to incorporate the views, interests and perspectives of the various stakeholders. This is not an easy task, because of the lack of a ‘common language’ and mutual understanding is not simple. The stakeholder process, therefore, deserves a lot of attention and it should be done in a serious way, whereas people that are not taken seriously will be disappointed and pull out of the process. The general unawareness of the general public and the complexity of the sediment issue are important hurdles to overcome. This subject deserves much attention in

the policy process and stakeholder involvement. Experts should focus on making their expert knowledge available to the general public and take time to explain the issue.

References:

- [1] Owens (Ed.) (2008) *Sediment Management at the River Basin Scale*, Elsevier
- [2] Edelenbos J (2000). *Process in Shape*. Lemma, Utrecht.