Report from the SedNet Round Table Discussion
6-7 October 2009

Sediment in River Basin Management Plans: Yes we can!

Piet den Besten, Steering Group SedNet
Background of the Round Table

- SedNet and RT conference held in Venice (2006)
- Draft WFD River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) have been published early 2009 and will be finalized soon.
- Problems with sediment are discussed in RBMP’s or seem to be there at the background.
- In the RBMP’s sediment management (quantity and quality aspects) received limited or no attention.
Objectives of the Hamburg Round Table

- To understand the present RBMP’s:
  - How are sediment issues addressed?
  - Which opportunities were identified?
  - How is sediment management organized?
  - What are the dominant processes and interests behind it?
- Recommendations for sediment management, e.g.:
  - Outside/inside WFD
  - Relation to WFD objectives
  - How to include in 2nd cycle of RBMP’s
Round Table Participants

- 30 participants from river commissions, governmental bodies, water agencies, port authorities, research institutes, consultancies, NGO’s, SedNet etc
- Rivers represented: Douro, Ebro, Danube, Sava, Drava/Mura, Elbe, Rhine, Scheldt, Thames
SedNet Round Table Participants
Round Table Participants concerns

- Historical contamination
- Recent contamination
- Eutrophication due to sediment resuspension
- Erosion of sediments
- Accumulation of sediments
- Lack of sediments
- Loss of habitat
- Dredging
- Sediment continuity
- Ecological impact of sediments
Why no sediment in RBMP’s and programmes of measures?

- Unclear liability ("who is going to pay?")
- Unclear management responsibility ("who is in charge?")
- Financial reasons
- Political reasons
- Too complex
- No clear target values/guidelines
- No/limited data
- Lack of knowledge/system understanding
- Sediments not considered a priority within WFD
Results of the round table:

- Linking sediment management to the WFD
- System understanding / holistic approach
- Dealing with uncertainties
- Guidance document
- Time line
Linking sediment to WFD frameworks

• Sediments are an integral part of the ecosystem and affect ecological and chemical status: this should be clearly communicated through good examples.

• Providing a better understanding of the linkage between sediment quality/quantity and WFD objectives will enable better RB planning, e.g.:
  – developing conceptual model of sediment fluxes and contaminant transport
  – sediment balance and dynamics of the system
  – link sediment features to ecological and chemical status
  – climate change issues – potential consequences
Holistic approach:

• The key to managing sediments is to take a holistic approach:
  – System understanding
  – Transboundary cooperation
  – Look at linkages between problems and issues across the whole RB and its components

• Communication and stakeholder involvement are keywords: social / consensus issues can be predominant on technical issues

• RBMP’s should include all linkages to ecosystem services (flood protection, habitats, sediment retention, sediment re-use, navigation, recreation, food production, etc.)
Uncertainties:

- Priority for cost-effective measures with high certainty of positive effects for achieving management objectives

- Do not use uncertainty as an excuse to do nothing, e.g. define „no regret measures“ (reversible/linkage with other management objectives)

- Stakeholder involvement will help making choices
Guidance document:

- Guidance how to include sediment management in RBMP‘s: show examples that demonstrate how sediment management makes RBM more effective.

- Guidance how to organize the process

- To be used by national competent authorities & the river basin managers

- Initially a SedNet product?
Timeline

2009
Short term: problem: sediment issues insufficiently considered in RBMPs

2015
Medium term: sediment management as an issue is linked to achieving WFD objectives and therefore a part of 2nd Cycle of RBMPs.

2021
Long term: sediment and RB management are considered in an integrated way in the context of the WFD
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION