



Enhancing stakeholder participation in river basin management using mental mapping and causality models

D. Haase

Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, Computational Landscape Ecology, Leipzig, Germany
(dagmar.haase@ufz.de)

Participation processes play a crucial role in implementing adaptive management in river basins. A range of different participative methods is being applied, however, little is known on their effectiveness in addressing the specific question or policy process at stake and their performance in different socio-economic and cultural settings. To shed light on the role of cultural settings on the outcomes of a participative process we carried out a comparative study of participation processes using group model building (GMB) in a European, a Central Asian, and an African river basin. We use an analytical framework which covers the goals, the role of science and stakeholders, the initiation and methods of the processes framed by very different cultural, socio-economic and biophysical conditions. Across all three basins, the GMB processes produced a shared understanding among all participants of the major water management issues in the respective river basin and common approaches to address them. The “ownership of the ideas” by the stakeholders, i.e. the topic to be addressed in a GMB process, is important for their willingness to contribute to such a participatory process. Differences, however, exist in so far that cultural and contextual constraints of the basin drive the way the GMB processes have been designed and how their results contribute to policy development.