



Surveying Community Based Catchment Management Groups in England and Wales

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Non-statutory catchment management initiatives that form community stakeholder groups can be defined as 'assemblies of interests who periodically convene to discuss, negotiate, plan or implement the management of streams, rivers, wetlands or lakes, or whole catchments'. The focus can include land based measures and best practices designed to influence water quantity or quality. Such initiatives embody an approach to resource management characterised by collaborative working and decentralized modes of assessment, planning and decision-making, these are or might be incorporated in the environmental governance processes as they are driven primarily by citizen concerns about the outcomes of water management decisions. There is, furthermore, growing international literature about such initiatives and some empirical evidence, particularly from comparative studies in the USA that enable possible factors influencing group sustainability and impact to be identified. This is key, where such groups are to be effective in participatory democracy.

Existing research informed the design of a survey of key informants in England, Scotland and Wales concerned with catchment management groups, providing a snapshot of the situation in mid-2009. This paper presents the results of this survey, including a categorisation of catchment management groups and analysis of factors potentially influencing their success, failure and sustainability. The respondents include indicators of size, organisational structure, membership, financing, technology transfer, policy influence and other outcomes. The results of the survey will be interpreted with reference to a wider, on-going investigation, of international approaches to catchment management and of the environmental governance challenges, including those posed by the European Union Water Framework Directive.