



Protecting drinkable water: an analysis of action plans and stakeholders' networks

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Since WFD the policy for protecting drinkable water has been enhanced in France. This policy establish the main components and the different steps for protecting drinkable water, and ask for defining and implementing an action plan for each contributing catchment. Despite ambitious objectives, the local implementation is difficult. Firstly there is a high diversity of stakeholders involved with local authorities, which are mainly: water agencies, agricultural chambers and consultants, authorities at regional and departmental levels. Most of the local authorities do not feel qualified enough for carrying out such a policy, as they are not really used to deal with technical and political issues related to agricultural diffuse pollutions. As a consequence assessed action plans are based on regulation and/or agri-environmental measures. More ambitious and complementary measures can be included, but without any support measure nor accurate objectives for their implementation. In the end, action plans reflect more a formal implementation of protection approaches than a search for efficiency by defining ambitious measures and the setting-up a consistent support scheme. The way stakeholders' networks mobilize knowledge have been analyzed based on ten case studies located in three different regions. Three local authorities profiles are defined: (1) the "passive" ones, not really convinced of the necessity to undertake actions against diffuse pollutions and/or having low level of knowledge to support local reflexion, that delegate project management; (2) the local authorities that support local protection approach but that, for different reasons, do not search for an effective action plan, and that only consider an improvement approach; (3) the local authorities that more rarely, aim at efficient actions, motivated by the urgent need of action for preserving threatened resources. According to these profiles, local authorities and their project coordinators will be looking for, more or less actively, mobilizing stakeholders' networks and knowledge that enable to build a strategic management. Reciprocally, institutional stakeholders push for more formal or demanding approaches, with most of the time low level of knowledge that could objectivize the relevance of action plans. This analysis contributes to help some key stakeholders, particularly local authorities, in building more efficient action plans.