

Catchment Research Consultative Group (CRCG) Meeting
APEX City Hotel, Dundee – 14 November 2008

Meeting and Partnership workshop

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Alastair Stephen	Scottish and Southern Energy
Carole Christian	SAC
George Ponton	Scottish Water
Ian Dickson	SAC
Katie Wilson	SEPA
Mike Bonell	University of Dundee, UNESCO Centre
Sarah Hendry	University of Dundee, UNESCO Centre
Stephen Midgley	SNIFFER
Andy Vinten	Macaulay Institute
Bob Ferrier	Macaulay Institute
Kelly Harper	Macaulay Institute
Kirsty Blackstock	Macaulay Institute
Simon Langan	Macaulay Institute
Susan Cooksley	Macaulay Institute

The format of the meeting included presentation updates on the two major topic areas of RERAD research followed by a workshop on **Partnership and Delivery under the Water Framework Directive (WFD)**. This topic was raised in the last CRCG in discussions about how best to deliver the outcomes that the WFD sets out to achieve, including combinations of legal frameworks, advice, market incentives, grants and regulatory sanctions; and who might work together to achieve effective and innovative solutions.

The main themes that emerged from the discussion of the ongoing RERAD funded research were:

- The need to consider the interaction of land use planning issues and their multiple policies;
- The importance of considering land cover and land use change, including developing scenarios under climate change;
- Flooding and flows – Natural Flood Management (fluvial) but also pluvial flooding – in particular urban drainage has problems of establishing roles and responsibilities;
- Importance of connecting flows, water quality and pathogens especially in relation to flooding;
- Need for ongoing public engagement in understanding different perceptions of science and law; and how to communicate science in a way that overturns scepticism and improves transparency
- Role of law in driving the context for water management - law reform such as regarding Integrated Water Resource Management can be a long, slow process – get it right!

Other issues, questions and comments that arose during discussion were;

- The importance of ensuring that phosphorus attenuation resulted in effective downstream remediation given site specific conditions;
- How can we continue to educate people to move to a low P lifestyle? What are the win: wins?
- In general, restoration strategies are poorly coordinated, how could this be improved?
- Information on our research on thermal requires an ecosystem function from research on Icelandic streams is now available at www.macaulay.ac.uk/waterquality/hydroecoprocess.php
- The Macaulay Institute has just established an experimental stream channel facility. If research groups are interested in utilising the facilities for collaborative research then they should contact the Catchment Management Group at Macaulay;
- Good ecological status to good ecological potential? How do we set standards given site specific constraints?;
- Consequences of flow regulation on ecology are still poorly understood, and there is a requirement for new monitoring as in many cases historical information is inadequate;
- There is a requirement to balance National guidelines with site specific consequences. The challenge in downscaling is not to be underestimated;
- Disproportionality – how can we make decisions which minimise operational impacts whilst adding environmental benefit?

Partnership workshop

The workshop on Partnership and Delivery under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) began with a brief presentation defining partnership working and delivery and suggesting some common themes arising from existing good practice guides followed by a general discussion. The overarching themes from the discussion were:

- Partnership is seen as a way for the future but individuals and organisations need to get recognition for time taken and credit for maintaining them
- How do we improve and maintain communication with potential and actual partners?
- How do we involve Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)? – Possibly through really being able to answer ‘What’s in it for me’?
- Use locally respected champions to explain the need for partnerships;
- There is a trade off between doing things yourself and taking the longer and/or riskier (via loss of control) process of partnership. When is partnership cost effective?
- How to align funding mechanisms with the development and maintenance of a partnership (when funding is normally for capital, not relationships);
- How do we coordinate processes more effectively? What resources are needed to do this?
- There is partnership fatigue – whose role is it to coordinate? Which plans are to be coordinated with which? Is this the role of Local Authority planners?

Where appropriate, these comments were also included in the revised guidance.

Following lunch, there were a series of short presentations from the organisations represented, which are summarised below.

Dee Catchment Management Plan: involves multiple partners in developing and delivering a plan. Currently, the partnership has four active projects: focussing on water quality (particularly diffuse); flows and runoff (including flooding); urban watercourses; and improving maintenance of septic tanks www.theriverdee.org/

SNIFFER: is involved in a variety of WFD projects to deliver the WFD objectives (e.g. WWT technology legislation) and these are all done in partnership through co-funding and having multiple organisations on the steering groups for the research. SNIFFER also work at a European perspective e.g. IWRM Era-net, which gives them access to additional funding and also the ability to share their learning. www.sniffer.org.uk/our-work/sustainable-land-use-and-water-management.aspx

UNESCO: delivers partnership working through their involvement in the HELP project. HELP focuses on implementing IWRM and brings together a network of 48 basins (11 in Europe, 7 in UK) to share their experiences. Each basin involves multiple partners. www.portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php

SAC: delivers several projects that involve partnership working such as the Monitored Priority Catchments and Environmental Focus Farms; their involvement in groups to provide advice to policy makers such as Scottish Agricultural Pollution Group; Nitrates Group; Scottish Rural Development Plan RPACouncils and Project Officer Water Resources Management (POWRM); joint publications such as the PEPFAA code and the BMP handbook; and projects such as AA315 – funded advice to farmers and the Brighthouse Bay project to improve bathing waters.

Scottish Water: working in partnership to protect drinking, water quality. Currently they are working within the Voluntary Initiative to reduce the use of pesticides and in specific catchments to input measures to protect drinking water, e.g. with East Lothian farmers.

Finally, smaller working groups considered the existing guidance on developing partnerships and added further comments as outlined below.

What kind of partnerships are developed?

- Funding
- Public – Private work with government to secure long-term success
- Pre-regulation working groups (e.g. SUDS)
- Multi perspectives and issues
- Shared perspectives on one single issue
- Grass roots e.g. Ythan volunteers
- Partnerships for legal enforcement, research, or advice are different

What motivated the start of the partnership?

- To achieve control
- To achieve independence
- To get the right mix of expertise
- To ensure synergy of outcomes
- Only way to tackle highly complex environment interactions and human needs
- To improve the sustainability of the project
- To improve communication and information/knowledge exchange
- To encourage wider ownership of the problem and the solutions

- To reduce or address conflict
- To deliver a legal requirement

What is the purpose of a partnership?

- To achieve funding
- To solve problems
- To save money and time
- To add value by pooling knowledge and money
- To avoid crisis management
- To understand and respond to stakeholders
- To inform business critical decisions (then can evolve e.g. change in coastal partnerships towards sustainability)

What have we learnt from our experiences?

- Partnerships are not always required or 'cost-effective'
- It is important to identify and use windows of opportunity
- It is important to identify the 'bottom' line – what is negotiable and what is not
- Partnerships need to be adaptive (to external and internal pressures)
- Identify roles and responsibilities and clarify any differences or misunderstandings
- Partnerships require compromise by individual partners – this can be difficult
- Partnerships need to take account of different aspirations and expectations
- Partnerships are resource intensive, hard work and time consuming
- Partnerships need active management to deliver outcomes – this needs to be resourced and supported, ideally through a coordinator
- Partnerships need a long time to deliver
- Partnerships need to produce outcomes
- It is important to feed back the outcomes of projects over the long term
- Communication is fundamental between and within organisations - you need to use different modes for different audiences
- Be aware of how different organisations and individuals interpret things e.g. diffuse pollution guidance and avoid the "blame game"
- It is important to decide which stakeholders to engage and when to engage them
- Work out whether you can afford the measures identified and where the money comes from
- It is important to archive information to allow evaluation
- It is important to evaluate progress during the partnership and at the end
- Listen to feedback and act on it (or explain why you can't)
- There is a need for transparency, particularly when using public funding
- Partnerships need a firm independent moderator/chair and champions to promote them
- Play to your strengths regarding human resources – try to get the right people and use the talents of those you have most effectively

What do we still need to know?

- How to end partnerships – final close down meeting. At the outset, identify how to end the partnership (e.g. a sort of ‘pre-nuptial’ agreement)?
- How to identify and fund follow on work, if necessary?
- How to achieve continuity and long term efficacy and inclusivity?
- How to estimate whether a partnership is needed and will it be cost-effective?
- What is the ‘right’ scale for partnership?

The revised guidance is available as a separate document and can be found on: http://www.macauley.ac.uk/projects/203078_checklist.pdf (in the process of being uploaded). Please circulate this guidance to anyone who might find it useful to their process. Please also let us know any comments you might have.

Please note that more generic guidance on ‘how to’ develop and implement a water management planning process will be shortly available at: <http://www.macauley.ac.uk/waterquality/KTiCatch.php>

Checklist for Partnership Working

Kirsty Blackstock & Claudia Carter, October 2006, updated January 2009.

This checklist was developed from the lessons learnt from the analysis of inter-agency (and wider partnership) working undertaken as part of the 3 Dee Vision project in 2006. It was further refined following a Catchment Research Consultative Group workshop on Partnership and Delivery under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in November 2008.

The checklist includes issues to consider at different stages in a partnership project, from the proposal, through planning and implementation to completion.

For more information, please read the full report at: www.3deevision.org/report_partnership.asp and see the information about the CRCG at: <http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/waterquality/KTcrg.php>

When developing a project proposal, are you thinking about:

- Whether a partnership is the most effective way to proceed;
- Why you need a partnership – to get funding; to avoid or manage conflict; to pool knowledge; to address a statutory requirement...?
- Are there external ‘windows of opportunity’ to harness? Is now the right time?
- Whether the project objectives are realistic for the resources and time available;
- Ensuring there is a budget and commitment to implement the project’s findings;
- How long it can take to ‘bed in’ efficient partnership working;
- Building on existing projects and relationships (to avoid re-inventing the wheel);
- Building in flexible time and resources to resolve unexpected (but inevitable) problems;
- Ensuring the group has a good mutual understanding of the project’s objectives;
- Different motivations for involvement in the project – how does the project relate to each partner’s core business and can these expectations can be met;
- Clarifying commitments from all involved, illustrating the critical interdependencies and getting a formal undertaking to honour these commitments;
- Clarifying the capacities are required (influence, experience, skills, time available, enthusiasm for objectives; reputation and status in their peer group) to deliver the project and recruiting members accordingly

- How you will decide when the partnership should end and how you will dissolve the partnership?

When setting up the structure and procedures for the project, are you thinking about:

- Establishing what kind of partnership is required (coordination, cooperation or collaboration), as this affects the structures (including the legal status) of the project and the degree of control exercised by each partner;
- Agreeing the specific roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved (especially the coordinator), including: delegated authority, accountability; distribution of risks;
- Recognising the non-negotiables (deadlines, statutory requirements, reporting requirements) within the project and plan accordingly;
- Developing a standard format for meetings with informative agendas, progress charts and clear minutes (and designating a chair and minutes secretary);
- Setting up appropriate monitoring to allow evaluation of tangible and intangible outcomes to occur
- Who is going to do the day-to-day management of the project and who is going to pay for this time;
- Undertaking a stakeholder analysis to identify key contributors to, and audiences for, the project and any conflicts that may arise as the project proceeds;
- Establishing a communication plan to ensure efficient and effective information exchange with the appropriate people at the appropriate time.

Whilst running the project, are you thinking about:

- Investing in effective, targeted and coordinated communication within the group and within each partner organisation (recognising personal preferences vary);
- Investing in effective decision-making including agreeing decision making and conflict resolution protocols;
- Investing in time for reflection and learning – including recognising tensions and setting time aside to resolve issues that may be acting as a handbrake on progress;
- Promoting group solidarity through formal team building, social events, hosting activities and celebrating milestones;
- Ensuring individuals have “ring fenced time” to deliver the project and their line manager understands and supports the expected level of commitment;
- Monitoring outcomes and reporting on achievements and/or addressing areas where outcomes are not being met;

- Communicating progress to wider stakeholders including local residents; funders and policy makers
- Revisiting the project objectives as these evolve through time;
- Revisiting the composition of the project team regularly;
- Adapting the structure, purpose and objectives of the partnership as the context changes
- Practicing what you preach – following the principles of Sustainable Development;
- Coordinating with other planning processes and projects – this takes time but makes the project more relevant and more likely to have national or international influence
- Planning for the future – what is to be the legacy for subsequent projects?

When finishing a project, will you think about:

- How to pass on the lessons learnt, how to tie up loose ends, and how the outstanding actions and commitments will get finished?
- What might need doing in the future and possible funding mechanisms for these actions?
- Who needs to know that the project has ended and how they might wish to contribute to follow-up actions?
- Thanking all those involved – not just the project team but colleagues, stakeholders and the public who contributed along the way.
- What you learned from the experience and how you might put this into practice in the future.

Take Home Messages:

The process of interagency working has an impact on its outcomes;

- Interagency working can have high transaction costs but can achieve more than the sum of their parts;
- All forms of working together require mutual need and mutual trust; but mutuality does not always mean equality;
- Inter-agency working can take many forms so use an approach that is fit for purpose;
- Whatever the approach, it will be necessary to adapt through time;
- Adaptation requires that all involved (individuals and organisations) are willing to change.

Further reading:

Fuller guidance on stakeholder involvement for WFD can be found within the HarmoniCOP handbook “Learning Together to Manage Together” - <http://www.harmonicop.info/>

Further guidance on partnership working can be found at: <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/>