



Water governance in the UK and EU

So far, so what and what next?



CADWAGO symposium, The Royal Society
London, 16th September 2015

Overview

Improving water governance is key to achieving a range of environmental, social and economic objectives including food, water and energy security, climate change resilience, health and well-being, and sustainable economic growth. This symposium brought together examples of innovations in research, policy and practice for transforming water governance, including:

- CADWAGO case studies from the UK, Canada and Australia;
- OECD's work on water governance principles;
- DEFRA's overview of the Catchment-based Approach; and
- Roe Catchment Community Water Management Group's formation and local collaborative actions.

CADWAGO researchers from the Open University have been working with Government bodies, NGOs, consultants, water industry, academics, and others to better understand the current water governance situation and how it might be improved in practice. The results of this engagement were used as a starting point for developing an agenda for transforming water governance in the UK and the EU, focusing on transformations in stakes and stakeholding, facilitation, institutions and policies, and knowing and learning.

Insights for Europe

“There's a lot we don't know, and that's ok; there's no `right' answer, and it's difficult.”

(quote from a symposium participant)

Some key findings

- We need to break down the barriers between catchment programmes so that engagement activities can be better coordinated, more effective, simplified and fewer. There is also a need to better understand why people exclude themselves from the process, or are excluded from the process.
- We need a national framework to guide the process of jointly identifying, enacting and evaluating improvements in water governance at a local scale.
- `Success' should be measured against multiple benefits arising from actions to improve water governance, including health and well-being, not just changes in water quality.

We would like to thank the participants, who shared their knowledge and experiences in climate change adaptation and water governance, and their organizations for enabling their participation.

For further information, see:

<http://mcs.open.ac.uk/cadwago/index.html>