

Public Participation in the Bacchiglione River Basin (Italy)

Case study report
Work Package 5



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Author : Antonio Massarutto, Alessandro de Carli, Chiara Longhi

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DSE – Università degli Studi di Udine

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Executive Summary / Main Findings

The Italian case study analyses the public participation process developed in the Bacchiglione Basin (North-east Italy) during the period from April 2002 to November 2003.

It provides a clear example of the NIMBY syndrome (Not In My Back Yard) where the clash of interests can't be solved and where consequent lobby, opposition, boycotting actions is evident.

This case study has arisen as a result of the need to safeguard drinking water resources in the upper Vicenza area (Veneto) which are seriously threatened by pollution and – even worse – by the waste originating from the towns' purification plants.

The Authority of the Bacchiglione river basin, responsible for the Water Infrastructure Project within the area which lays under the Bacchiglione river basin, was therefore obliged to start interventions regarded as a priority in order to safeguard the drinking water resources and to improve the environmental conditions through instillation of a wider and more effective sewerage and purification system.

The creation of a Technical Work Team aimed at favouring tools of integrated planning grounded on the negotiation of interests and on participation. This group has been supported by another purely technical team whose task is to get data and information useful to work out one or more possibilities related to the proposal of the final location of the two waste water treatment plants. Afterwards a participatory process has been put into place involving three different workshops within the duration of the project, as well as various meetings in order to supply valid indications to the formulation of the Water Infrastructures Plan (*Piano d'Ambito*). This plan was hopefully likely to be institutionalised and utilised in order to study all the problems related to the Bacchiglione, while assisting members of the technical work team to identify types of decisions required to be taken.

1 Introduction and Approach

The participatory process analysed in the Italian case study is located in the area of the Bacchiglione river basin (North-east Italy).

The informal participation has been largely developed in the last ten years in Italy and there are several examples among which also the case considered can be analysed.

It can be regarded as a “Pact for Waters” involving three main characteristics which are identified below:

1. Instrument to create particular interests within a common good, and to develop the territory, while enhancing its peculiar characteristics. This instrument is to involve the local knowledge drawing upon relevant expertise, particularly those people who work in the scientific and technological innovation fields.
2. Agreement promoted by local boards, by social parts or by other public or private subjects, related to the realization of an intervention programme characterised by precise objectives aiming at the promotion of local development.
3. Instrument to identify a coordinated whole of productive and promotional interventions, as well as infra-structural and functional ones”.

The participatory process has at least firstly been started up in order to support the formulation of the Water Infrastructures Plan as to a single action to be performed (waste water treatment plant of *Tiene*); afterwards, the structuring topics gradually increased due to the interaction among the stakeholders, the technicians and the advisors responsible for the Programme planning; it has been finally claimed that the emerged solutions will represent an advanced prototype to be extended to the whole Bacchiglione area.

We have a privileged description of this project as two research workers in our University have personally followed the participatory process since its very first start through until its last meeting, being therefore able to identify the values and defects associated with the process. As to this element, a critical and “*super partes*” analysis of the Bacchiglione Pact has been made, attempting to analyse all the defects from every possible perspective.

Moreover the analysis of the case study is based on information gathered from:

- analysis of public documents produced during the participatory process (CD-Rom, Internet site, etc.);
- interviews with key actors about their impressions of the participatory process.

2 Context

2.1 Environmental context

The Bacchiglione river basin is an important catchment area in the Veneto region (North-East Italy). Its territory spreads completely over this region which is bordered by the Adriatic sea, the Po river basin and the Alps. The Bacchiglione River covers a total length of 118 km and a total area of 3 000 km². Figure 1 provides an overview of the catchment area.

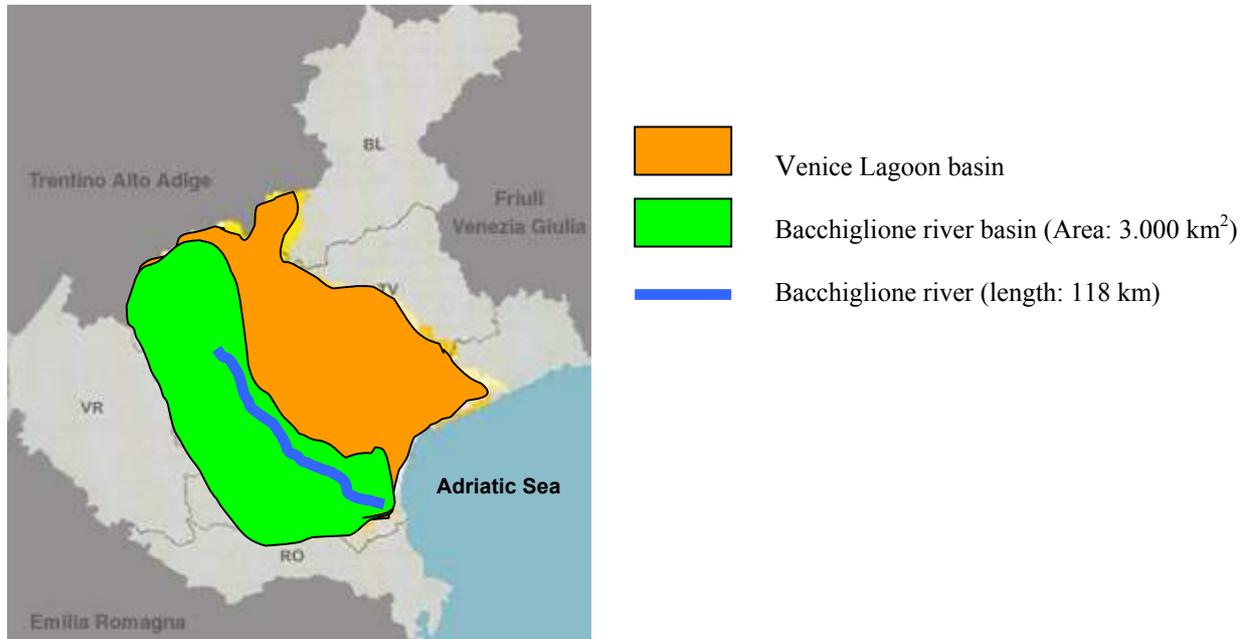


Figure 1: Relationship between Bacchiglione River Basin and Venice Lagoon basin.

The territory can be moreover divided into four morphologically homogeneous areas described below in the Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of different morphological areas

Area	Natural context	Artificial context
Mountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carsick areas - Hydro-geological risk 	-Water resources management fragmented
Hills	- Protected Areas (BioItaly; Directive 1992/43/CEE, Park of “ <i>Colli Euganei</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extractive activities -Agriculture (Wine) -Tourism (Thermal Baths)
High plane – Recharge area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Springs - High vulnerability of underground waters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -High pressure on the underground waters -Agricultural pollution of surface waters -Industrial pressure on water resources
Low plane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alluvional plane - Artificial network of canals - Floods - Interaction with Venice Lagoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Urban sprawl (metropolitan area of Vicenza and Padova) -Intensive agriculture -Industrial activities

The mountain area and the high plain of the Bacchiglione basin are characterised by an abundance of underground water. Its presence has assisted in considerable social and economic development associated with the Veneto region.

Recent research has identified significant environmental degradation with respect to the basin’s main aquifer systems due to a significant change in the balance between natural and human activities. In this territory particular attention is to be paid to the Lagoon of Venice, where characteristic surroundings pass one after the other from the dry land to the sea (see figure 1). The lagoon of Venice is a damp near-shore environment characterised either by water’s exchange or by a large system of shipways which get into the inner areas, thus communicating with other smaller ones.

Further downstream in the catchment, the Bacchiglione is fed by good quality springs waters which improve the river environment as far as the entrance and the crossing of Vicenza, where it receives urban discharges and the supplies of the water courses generally polluted by industrial waste. Moving further downstream again, the waste coming from Padova and from the low plain full of towns and industrial areas, is added. The waters of the territory of Veneto are important for the history of this region and for the morphologic transformation of this area; they must undergo a constant monitoring as they might affect the delicate balance of the lagoon’s system (they spread out for about 200km on the coastline). These surface waters flow through a territory influenced increasingly by human action.

Economic activities areas associated with industrialisation, tourism in the form of thousands of resorts, scattered in the plain and urbanisation result in a significant impact either on the water resource quality and morphology. The amount of intensive farming (sown lands and poplar groves) has increased, while settlements are ever expanding, resulting in a decrease in the length of the rivers’ natural courses. In addition these settlements sometimes take up meanders and high-water beds”.¹

¹ Trevisiol *et al.* (2002)

2.2 Institutional context

The Water Protection Corporation in the Bacchiglione river basin are summarized in the following table:

Table 2: Institutional context in RBM

	Institutional level	Rules
National level	National institutions	Framework legislation
	National Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Bonds at national level
	<i>Magistrato alle Acque di Venezia</i>	Flood protection actions
	River basin authorities (national, interregional or regional)	General Planning
	Regions	Applicative legislation, planning at regional level
	Provinces	Administrative issues, planning at provincial level
	Municipalities	Administrative issues, planning at municipal level
↓	Water Services Authorities (ATO)	Water Infrastructures Plans
↓	Regional Environmental Protection Agency (ARPAV)	Environmental Bonds at regional level
↓	Local Public Health Authorities (ASL)	Health Bonds
	Water Services Companies	Sectorial Plans
Local level	Irrigation and Drainage Boards	Sectorial Plans

As it has deeply been discussed in the "National approaches and background on public participation – Italy" report in the WP4, the law 36/1994 (Galli Law) meant to reorganize aqueduct, sewerage and depuration systems, water services within the Optimum Territorial Area (*Ambito Territoriale Ottimale - A.T.O.*); local corporations included in each ATO have to organize this service by the institution of somebody representing them - (Authority of ATO) - who is to define, among other things, the operation plan for the interventions which are necessary in order to conform the water infrastructures system to the directives foreseen during the basin's planning. Besides the issuing of these directives and the definition of the quality targets to be achieved, also the ATO delimitation and the rules' definition for the Authority of ATO establishment and functioning are due to the District or to the Basin Authority.

ATO programme might be essentially regarded as a second level programme which puts into practice the basin's programme with particular reference to the intervention in the purification sector. Veneto passed the law 36/1994 with LR 5/1998 which sets up the 8 optimal territorial areas (ATO).

Among these, the authority in ATO Bacchiglione is the one which manages the Bacchiglione River Basin. It's a pool made up by 144 communes: their aim is to supervise the integrated water cycle which includes the water's picking up, conduction, assignment and allocation within civil uses as well as the waste waters sewerage, depuration and regeneration systems which influence the water quantity and quality status of Bacchiglione river.

2.3 Socio-economic political context

The socio- economic context of Veneto Region and therefore the Bacchiglione's one, is characterized by a complex and widespread economic system, that consists of a multitude of small towns as well as a number of industrial towns specialising in different fields.

The course of the river passes through a wide area (144 communes of two districts), where a population of almost 900.000 inhabitants live. In the same area there are moreover several productive activities to which, in terms of inhabitants-is collectively equivalent to more than two million inhabitants (1,14 million inhabitant equivalent in the district of Vicenza, 970.000 industrial inhabitants equivalent in Padova). The total population equivalent for the Bacchiglione River basin is greater than three million (1.6 millions inhabitants equivalent in the district of Padova).

The principal industrial activities are:

Textile industries and tanneries.	~ 3500 enterprises
Agricultural food and industry	~ 2000 enterprises
Pig- breeding	~ 164.000 breeding
Intensive agriculture specialized in cereals productions	10.600 ton/year of cereals
Wine production in the hill area:	1.680 ton/year
Tourism in the hill area either for parks or for thermal baths development	Authorisations for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thermal water abstraction: 143 • drinking water abstraction: 26

The variety of industrial activities, together with their not concentrated location, has eventually been the cause of the diffusion of a not concentrated polluting load, therefore not easy to be correctly treated. This is one of the main reasons of the water problems connected with the basin of the Bacchiglione river.

3 Description of the PP Process

3.1 Activities / Phases

The decisive element of this process goes back to 1989, when the Regional Water Quality Plan planned the doubling of a waste water treatment plant placed in the high plain (see Figure 2) and the subsequent construction of a waste water pipeline in order to convey its waste down to the plain (see Figure 3). While carrying out this project it wasn't properly clear where to discharge the polluted load as the right place should have been just upriver of the landscape protection area (*Bosco di Dueville - Vicenza*), which undergoes specific protection standards by a Regional Territorial Plan (*Piano Territoriale Regionale di Coordinamento*) as resurgence area: a possible waste would unavoidably alter the resurgence water's characteristics.

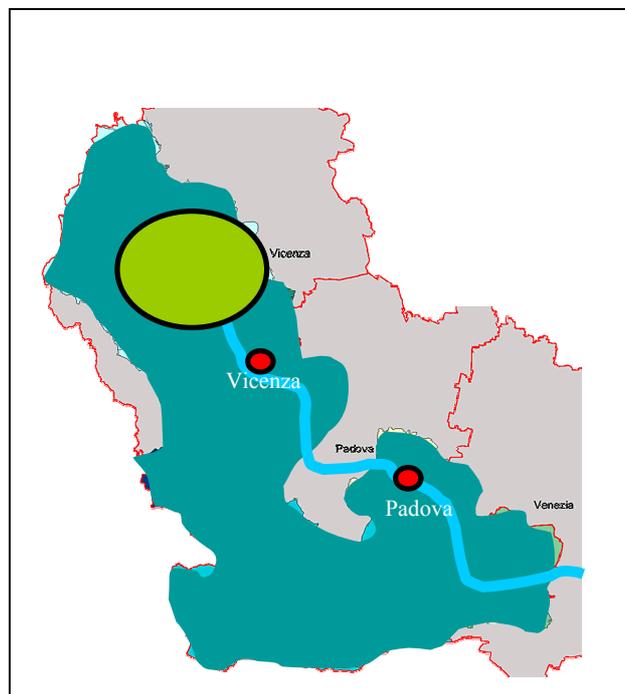


Figure 2: The area interested by the pipeline project

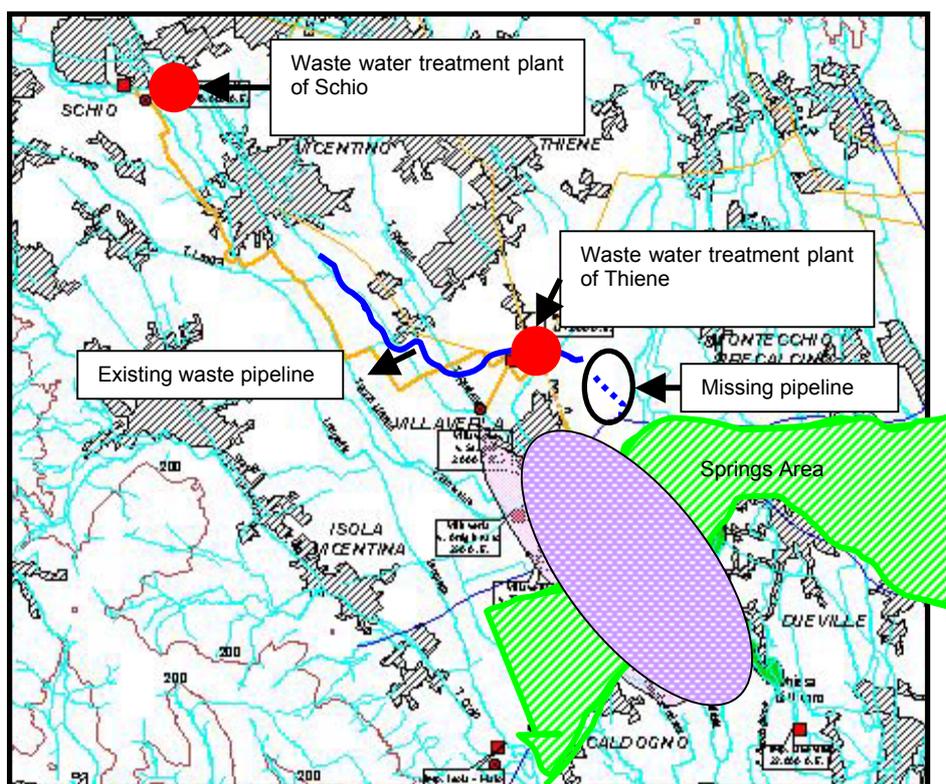


Figure 3: Particular of the technical project

Great was the concern of the Water Service Director, of the downstream communes, and of the citizens (Fishermen). The Authority in Optimum Territorial Ambit “Bacchiglione”, born when the project was already started and needed a solution, decided to face it actively.

The Authority of ATO (*Ambito Territoriale Ottimale* – Optimum Territorial Area) - Bacchiglione firstly set up a **Project Team (PT)**. This group has been supported by a more specifically technical group, named Operative Technical Team (*Gruppo Tecnico Operativo* – **GTO**) whose task was to collect all the data, the information and the elements useful to advance one or more technical proposals about the final destination of the waste water pipeline

The Project Team was composed by:

- the director and the technicians of the Authority of ATO;
- the Regional Administration of Veneto;
- the District Administration of Vicenza;
- the technicians of the Regional Environmental Agency (ARPAV);
- the technicians of the Water Services Companies;
- the planners of the water infrastructures project;
- the representatives of the Municipalities of the area involved by the pipeline problem.

The GTO consisted of all the Project Team members and moreover of:

- university consultants experienced at the water and at the planning field;

- Boards and Associations' representatives differently involved in the problems related to the water main.

This approach was, at the beginning, reserved to a few people, afterwards the number of the stakeholders involved in the process increased. The choice was made because of a deeper knowledge of the problem as the team project members became increasingly aware that not only a small part of the territory was involved, but that the effects might have had been spread all over the basin. Moreover, shifting the attention to the whole basin enabled the necessity of analysing the critical points for the entire basin to be raised.

The decision of starting up a wider participation approach originated from the support provided by some of the technicians who cooperate with the board, and who were aware of some positive participative experiences either in Italy or abroad; far beyond from following the indication of Directive 2000/60/EC which supports Public Participation. A new phase therefore started (October 2002) and in it 300 members were involved.

The **Widened Technical Group** (*Gruppo Tecnico Allargato – GTA*) was the group who was made up of part of the project team, part of the GTO and selected and representative members of stakeholders who were participated to the 1st Workshop. In Table 3 the composition of groups is summarised.

Table 3: Composition of the several group structured during the process

Phase		Members	Groups		
1 [^]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATO Director and technicians • ARPAV technicians • Water Services Companies • Planners of the water infrastructures project • Regional Administration of Veneto • Provincial Administrations technicians 	PT	GTO	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University consultants experienced at the water and at the planning field • Boards and Associations’ representatives differently involved in the problems related to the water main 			
2 [^]		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATO technicians (PT) • ARPAV technicians (PT) • Provincial administrations technicians (PT) • Water Services Companies (PT) • Irrigation and drainage boards • Environmental NGO • Fishermen Association 			GTA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other stakeholders involved in river basin issues • 144 municipalities representatives • Cultural and Environmental Associations • Sport Associations (canoe) • Farmer Associations • Industrial Association 	Stakeholders involved only during the meetings		

The second phase of the process was finalised in October 2002 and finished with the editing of the Water Infrastructures Project. The October 2002 workshop was the first plenary event of the Participatory Process, which continued in April 2003, and which ended in November 2003.

The workshop was organised either through plenary sessions in the morning or through work sessions, structured in thematic groups, in the afternoon. About 200 people (including stakeholders and participants) took part in the first two meetings: all of them were skilled or well respected either in technological or in scientific innovations. Their cooperation with local boards and private and public subjects was successful in finding agreements related to the interventions aimed at specific promotion of sustainable local development objectives.

In the third workshop, attended by the Environment Ministry, even more participants were involved; this fact is the evidence of the considerable share given by trade associations, public boards, private and public subjects, technicians, universities, citizens and mass media. During the workshop, the main elements of structuring the Water Infrastructures Plan were expounded: in particular, the process which concluded this phase of the process can be divided into the following parts:

The Table 4 collects the chronology of several meetings organised during the participatory process, with their purpose, the adopted methodology and the level of involvement.

Table 4: Chronology, purpose, methodology and involvement level of meetings

Data	Meeting	Purpose	Methodology	Involvement level
April 2002	Project Team meeting (24 members)	To understand how solve the problem of waste water pipeline.	Round Table	Consultation
June 2002	GTO Meeting	To analyse the collected data and proposed alternative solutions	Round Table	- Information-retro-action - Consultation
October 2002	1 st Workshop: “ <i>Patti per le acque: il fiume Bacchiglione</i> ” Invited: 224 Participants: 130	To present the problem, the analysis and the alternative solutions	- Extended Workshop - Working groups	- Education - Information - Consultation
February 2003	Constitution of the GTA	To analyse problems connected to the Bacchiglione River Basin	Working groups	- Information-retro-action - Consultation
February-April 2003	GTO and GTA meetings	Analysis of River Basin, our problems and the alternative solutions	- Working groups - Briefings	- Information-retro-action - Consultation
April 2003	2 nd Workshop 2: “ <i>Scenari e prospettive per il fiume Bacchiglione –Il Piano e oltre il Piano</i> ” Invited: 189 Participants: 90	Presentation of studies about the river basin and suggestions for the redaction of the Water Infrastructure Plan.	- Extended Workshop - Working groups o	- Education - Information - Consultation
May-October 2003	GTO and GTA meetings	Analysis of feasibility of proposed solutions and other studies about the river basin	- Working groups - Briefings	- Information-retro-action - Consultation
November 2003	3 rd Workshop: “ <i>Il Piano d’Ambito</i> ” Invited: 340 Participants : 110	Presentation of the other studies about the river basin and the technicians decisions about the redaction of the Water Infrastructure Plan.	- Extended Workshop - Working groups	- Education - Information - Consultation

3.2 IC Tools

This participatory process is not characterised by the use of innovative IC tools (i.e. DSS).

The IC tools can be divided into two categories:

1. those utilised to supply widespread and easily available information for most people;
2. those utilised in order to support the technicians' exposition of information and documents.

Internet and E-mail, regarded as instruments which allowed everyone to get to the written documents, even those who do not belong to the stakeholders group, belong to the first group.

Accessibility was actually infinite for everyone. The dissemination of information was also assisted by 2 CD Rom which contained the process' documents.

More general maps – Paper Model – Interactive Board – Information System – Spreadsheet – GIS – Visualization Tool – belong to the second group and are generally utilised by those stakeholders who were directly involved in the “supplying” of the topics to foster the surveys about the river's basin and also by the organisers to make information accessible with the following aims: to spread as much information as possible and to support the technicians' exposition of information and documents. This aspect was a key objective for organisers in the Bacchiglione Basin. The only attempt to create a sort of interactivity among the stakeholders, was represented by the opening of an interactive open debate but it didn't confirm any result as two people only participated. IC tools were used by stakeholders in order to show the results used by the organizers and by the workshop speakers but not by all the stakeholders.

3.3 Outcomes

All the topics used in the workshop's editing, as well as the speakers' speeches, the team-work's records, the workshop's results, can be regarded as outcomes and have been recorded in two interactive CD Rom.

Moreover, during the Participated Process, some stakeholders reported the workshops and the team – work's contents. The fishermen group can be regarded as a good example; the representatives of the group were invited to the workshop and organized another meeting in order to inform the groups' participants about the choices and the alternatives highlighted during the ATO meetings.

3.4 Feedback

In order to analyse the feedback property, the objectives of a participated process use in the Bacchiglione river case, must be taken into account:

- the participation was born to support the decisions to be taken as to the Water Infrastructures Plan (*Piano d'Ambito*) editing.
- a Participated Process was carried out in order to reduce the conflicts and to make the stakeholders and participants come to an agreement.
- the participation was useful to educate the stakeholders about the rivers' problems, about the approaches to be applied to the existing legislation, to the innovative technologies etc. At the end of the process which lead to the Water Infrastructure Plan editing, it was noticed that all the three above mentioned points had been successfully reached.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Framing - Reframing

The Participatory Process was, at the beginning, a simple collaboration between the “institutional” stakeholders – assisted by a few technicians – and some people who were experienced in this sector: the aim was to analyse the best solution to solve a precise problem concerning the localisation of a wastewater discharge.

The analysis of the case study *brought to the fact* that the problem wasn't precise but it solicited the stakeholders' interest who had not been previously actively involved. Thanks to the contribution of a technician, professor at Venice Architecture University², who had experience in supporting other Participatory Processes, and of a director of the board in charge of Water Infrastructures Plan editing in the Bacchiglione basin, the process has been extended to other stakeholders: at first those belonging to the district mostly interested by the principal problem, and afterwards to those somehow bound to the river's basin territory.

A stakeholders' network was therefore created and it was mainly composed of Institutional Boards, Environmental and Cultural Associations, Sports Associations (Fishermen and Canoeists), Farmers Associations, Industrial Associations, experts, technicians, basin Authorities, land – reclamation syndicate. Shifting from a “precise” to a “widespread” problem, a different approach has been adopted: at the beginning researches and analysis had been carried out in a restricted part of the basin's territory, afterwards a deeper knowledge of all the Bacchiglione basin was regarded as necessary.

Surveys made by other boards were taken into account, comparing their knowledge and, in some cases, other studies were commissioned in order to deepen some problems and some alternative solutions. The Participative Process, besides its development, allowed the evolution of knowledge too, thus creating not only a general culture among the stakeholders but putting also in touch their skills and favouring communication and consent.

4.2 Assumption of Roles / definition of roles

By observing the pattern also previously analysed, every group role is now checked: the **Project Team**'s aim was, in its first phase, to decide about the different alternatives for the solution of the manifold's problem as to the already mentioned depurator. In the second phase, its role was to direct the decisions for the Water Infrastructures Plan formulation all over the Bacchiglione basin - as stated by the director of the authority of .A.T.O. in an interview.

GTO aim was to supply specific knowledge and studies, especially in the first phase; afterwards, its task was to keep the stakeholders and the project team in touch and to provide incentives for discussions during workshops, thus acting as “facilitator/mediator”. One of the consultants played a leading role in promoting the Participatory Process that later on was developed.

This was the most active group in finding and working out all the data gathered: the aim was to supply on the one hand the materials to be distributed during the workshops, on the other to consider the ideas suggested and to bring the decisions to the project team, even if the decisions taken were always to be evaluated by the project team itself.

² Prof. E. Trevisiol, IUAV – University of Venice

The cooperation between these two groups lead to the creation of “participation moments” (Workshops) thus providing the basic knowledge and preparing all the materials and making them available for the stakeholders.

The **GTA** was the group who gathered part of the team project, part of the GTO and part of the **stakeholders**. The meeting among these groups aimed at considering how to set out the widened workshops which subsequently occurred, considering the speeches as to the contributions given by the stakeholders representatives. Other stakeholders mainly played the role of “educators” as to the river’s basin and as to the relationships with institutional boards.; they also brought forward their knowledge, in particular:

- Environmental and Cultural Associations brought forward either a technical approach or a specific point of view as to different problems.
- Sports Associations (fishermen, canoeists) as river’s direct “exploiters” who can better appreciate any improvement and who are in the position of evaluating some problems.
- Farmers Associations who are to be educated as far as the water resource’s safeguard and exploitation.
- Industrial Associations are, together with the farmers’, the river’s most polluting elements: they were mainly involved in order to highlight the problem.

4.3 Boundary management

The management of the above mentioned basin is more and more aimed at by several interests which sometimes seem to be antithetical. The action’s and interest’s range (boundary management) is kaleidoscopic and characterized by a lot of facets whereas even single person has a widespread relationship network within such a process.

Since the lack of confidence between the planning and the realisation of the project, mainly managed by technicians, was increased, it was decided to discuss the problems related to the pipeline matter. From this viewpoint, the Authority of ATO Bacchiglione founded a new work group represented by associations and boards directly involved in the *Tubone* (waste water pipeline) matters and supported by a technical group.

Afterwards, in the negotiated process, new participants were let in and the discussed problems’ list became longer and longer: the pressures’ status on the Bacchiglione system was expounded; the river’s evaluation instruments (park river areas, ecological networks), monitoring, precautionary measures, as to the water resource, have been taken into account.

From the local to the basin area the problem became wider. The participants themselves doubted, new people were involved between the first and the third meeting: this fact shows how big the contribution brought by the stakeholders and the participants of this privileged ambit has become. Despite of this positive vision, industrialists and farmers’ associations play an important role among the always present and invited stakeholders, but they never accepted the invitation

“Smaller groups” - that is to say all those associations who are not often taken into account - agreed to take part in the process.

4.4 Evolution of interest, functions and strategies

The Participated Process in the Bacchiglione basin was born thanks to the team project and the GTO, who realized how the problem was actually involving environmental and cultural wider interests.

A wider stakeholders' involvement occurred; a further increase in participation showed from 200 to 300 guests; a clear signal of a deeper interest towards the problem. A deep changing occurred also within the GTO: from the role of experts some consultants passed to the one of promoters of participated process, and, afterwards, to the one of facilitators/mediators during the PP.

As to the strategies' changes an evolution was suggested : an interactive forum was born in order to increase the interaction and the communication levels among the stakeholders. Unfortunately it didn't get the hoped success, as two participants only were finally present. Such a system was clearly regarded as "biting off more than one could chew".

4.5 Critical events (turning points) analysis

The "step-by-step" evolution of the process allowed to reduce critical events. The continuous framing-reframing allowed to improve the comprehension of the problem and, consequently, improve the participation, as described in the previous paragraphs.

A strong criticism to the mentioned process is to be made paraphrasing an "open letter" about the Bacchiglione Water Infrastructures Plan³, contained in the third last workshop which foresaw the principal components, which organize the Water Infrastructure Plan, to be set out: "indefinite indications about the Water's Infrastructures Plan contents have been provided to the participants thus not allowing either a clear vision or an analytical documentation about each statement". This point of view is also backed with a interview to the representative of the Fishermen Association who insists on the difficulty of getting clear and usable information about the over-mentioned Plan. A shared opinion is the fact that, in these occasions, as to get a wider participation/interaction complex and sometimes indefinite concepts must be easier to be understood avoiding to provide big amounts of not useful and often boring written reports.

4.6 Mechanisms that foster social learning

One of the consultants who was firstly called as a "water expert" was the one who fostered the creation of a Social Learning Process. As his previous experiences dealt with other participative processes, only as time went by he managed to convince the Director of the Bacchiglione River Basin Authority, to institute a participative process which was also brought to the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto⁴. This choice was mainly accepted as a promotion in order to release AATO to its public and to be well liked by politicians. The consent problems raised by some of the Water Infrastructures Plan's choices induced even the people responsible of the editing of such a instrument to involve also "Right-holder" chosen among the associations and boards directly interested in the river's basin problems. These can be grouped in the following categories:

- Administrative stakeholder, who put a legal pressure;
- Water Service managers, who put a financial pressure;
- Boards Associations, who put a social pressure.

The Mediators or facilitators of the Participative Process may play a leading role in its creation. Their aim was to stimulate discussions and interaction meanwhile making some most difficult or most-aimed-at-technicians more easy to be understood, especially to those who are not expert in this field. Who played this role had equally the task to acknowledge the points which would have needed

³ A.A.V.V. – January 2004

⁴ The Bacchiglione river case study was presented by Prof. Trevisiol at the 3th World Water Forum in Kyoto (March 2003). For further information see: <http://www.cirf.org/kyoto/waterforum3.php3#relatori>

furthermore explanations in subsequent moments in order to increase comprehension and agreement. A system which, supported by workshops and team works, led to the creation of the Social Learning was represented by the availability of all the interactively produced and endowed documentation which could be always available and easy to be downloaded in any moment by anyone who might be interested in it. This system led to the information spreading and the implementation of a “basic” culture even for the non expert ones.

4.7 Barriers to social learning

One of the first social learning barriers comes from the fact that the stakeholders involvement was seen by the organisers themselves from two different points of view:

1. a system which allowed the directly involved community’s animation, making it feel acquainted and creating a “social capital” trying to make different skills and different stakeholders levels working together”;
2. a simple system aiming at creating consensus about the Plan’s choices (from the Director of the Authority of ATO point of view who aimed at editing the Water Infrastructure Plan in the Bacchiglione river basin).

As it’s easy to be understood, a different approach in the creation of a suitable and common aim existed since the very beginning. The participation, although addressed to a wide number of groups, caused the lack of a spread acquaintance. As previously confirmed, strategically important associations and industrialists and farmers did not take part in it. A scarce interest as well as a sort of distrust emerge from the interviews of the representatives of the above mentioned associations who regard the meeting as not important: “We had more important undertakings” – as one representative of *Unindustria* asserts.

Other problems deal with the process’ organizational field:

- a proper place where to set relationships with the stakeholders did not exist. The meetings occurred during the workshops usually took place in different centres and at a temporal distance of six months from one another.
- relevant relationships between stakeholders and G.T.O. were not created. The only informal way of being in touch with, was represented by the fact that one member of the Operative Technical Group usually belonged to some groups or associations which were regarded as stakeholders. The only “web” moments were represented by the workshops and teams-work who allowed the connections and the sharing of information between boards and experts.
- the attempt of creating a network and formal information exchange through the creation of an Interactive forum was not successful.

This process might be criticisable as it didn’t aim at involving “strong” participants such as the industrialists and the farmers of the district examined. This happened because the first ones didn’t want to negotiate their interests during the workshops – as *Unindustria* (Industrial Association) director asserted; the second ones, on the contrary were too busy and didn’t have time enough. This difference emphasizes how industrialists don’t trust this kind of process while farmers seemed to have a positive opinion. During the various sessions IC tools weren’t much used; portable computers were used to screen the speakers’ accounts which included charts containing geo-referential programmes aiming at providing the territory’s identity as to its society self- identification.

4.8 Specific roles of IC tools

The types of the IC tools used have already been explained, in this chapter the reasons of their employment and their efficacy will be analysed. It's necessary to remember that most of the IC tools were utilised by the process' technicians and organizers in order to make all the gathered materials more easily accessible and legible. Complex typologies like DSS were not used as the technicians didn't have a proper knowledge as far as they were concerned. This kind of instruments would have let stakeholders being directly involved, but as their variety was great, it was difficult to "train" them all at a shared IC tool methodology. Moreover , all the stakeholders' different cultures might have caused learning difficulties (in some of them) either for age problems or because not adequately "qualified". The reasons why this scarce utilization has been employed can be different and can be employed as follows:

- the technicians lack of preparation about IC tools directly involving stakeholders;
- as the variety of the stakeholders involved is great, it was difficult to train them all in a shared IC tools methodology;
- the stakeholders' various cultures might have caused learning difficulties either for age problems or because not adequately "qualified".

5 GENERAL REFLECTIONS

The participative process, developed in the Bacchiglione river basin, can be regarded as an “informative” kind of process as mainly based on the information, given to the stakeholders, which legitimised the Plan’s choices. The stakeholders’ listening and learning of these choices is equally important. Looking at the process from this point of view, its positive aspect can be underlined. Another element which determines the process’ success is the fact of relying on the participation of the public operators interested in it, (Integrated Water Service Managers, Environmental Sector of the two districts, Environment Agency, Communes’ offices), who learnt a new way of working, collaborating, and sharing materials, thus breaking the rigorous and not functional institutional apparatus. Such a process “ surely encouraged the spreading of a different administrative culture that, as to impose itself, would require the revision of the different institutional offices’ organigrams, the allocation of special economic resources and the creation of new professionalism, (regarding in particular the communication technologies, work group and the participated planning’s methodologies). The process was also an efficacious instrument aiming at the local community’ self – identification with its context’s problems, at providing the technicians accounts, at sometimes suggesting possible solutions meanwhile encouraging the single subjects’ and local interest representation groups full of autonomy and responsibility.

Six months before the last widened workshop’s end, some questions are still open.

The first one, encouraged by many stakeholders, wonders if the choices and the indications taken during the process are going to be taken into account during the implementation of the Water Infrastructures Plan on the territory.

The second one – not less important – wonders if the process’ aim was to legitimise the Plan’s choices – according to what the director of the responsible board asserts – it can be regarded as finished/ ended; but if the aim was to create a new way of interacting among the stakeholders as to the administration’s new way of operating – as the process’ promoter declares – it can be on the contrary regarded as a first experience from which other similar ones are being born within the same board and the same basin, meanwhile concentrating on a problem about a different river.

6 REFERENCES

Trevisiol E., Carraro V., Costantino L., 2002, *Workshop Patti per le Acque: il fiume Bacchiglione*, 24 ottobre 2002, Ed. TECNOlogos (CD-ROM)

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Appendix A Bacchiglione River Basin Case Study

Process Studied	Scale	Level of Participation e.g. consultation	Phase of Project	Case Study Typology e.g. H1,RT1
“Negotiated Cognitive Process” in the Bacchiglione river basin (North-east Italy)	Basin scale (3.000 km ²)	Information Consultation	End of a first phase of consultation for the redaction of the Water infrastructure Plan	H1, H2, RT1

Level of involvement and tools used						
Level of involvement/ Participation	PP Methods/ Techniques	Phase of process where used				
		1	2	3	4 not started	5 not started
Information Supply	2.1 Leaflets/Brochures	X	X			
	2.2 Mailings	X	X			
	2.3 Media e.g. press releases or conferences					
	2.4 Specific Information centres	X	X			
	2.5 Repositories e.g. libraries, town halls					
	2.6 (Travelling) Exhibitions					
	2.7 Information hot-lines/contact persons	X	X			
	2.8 Open house					
	2.9 Field trips					
	2.10 Briefings (at other conferences, associations, etc.)	X	X			
	2.11 Internet and other ICT Tools (see later template)	X	X			

	2.12 Cultural events					
	2.13 Other (please list)					
Consultation	2.14 Reply forms					
	2.15 Opportunity for written comment		X			
	2.16 Public hearings and meetings	X	X			
	2.17 Interviews	X	X			
	2.18 Opinion polls					
	2.19 'Stakeholder analysis'	X	X			
	2.20 Gaming					
	2.21 Internet discussions		X			
	2.22 Advisory commissions/boards or focus groups	X	X			
Participation in planning and implementation	2.23 Methods 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11 could be used in this context as well (please state if this is the case)					
Not started	2.24 Other (please list)					
Discussion	2.25 Small group meetings (e.g. workshops, roundtables, brainstorming sessions, etc.)	X	X	X		
	2.26 Large group meetings, involving splitting up into smaller groups (e.g. working groups, open space meetings)	X	X	X		
	2.27 Methods 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.20 and 2.22 may also be used in this context (please state if this is the case)					
	2.28 Other (please list)					
Shared decision-making	2.29 Negotiations e.g. resulting in 'voluntary agreement'					
	2.30 Stakeholders represented in governing bodies					

Not started	2.31 Methods 2.26 and 2.27 (please state if this is the case)					
	2.32 Other (please state)					
Self Determination	2.33 Water users' associations and other NGOs performing public functions					
	2.34 Popular initiatives					
	2.35 Methods 2.26 and 2.27 (please state if this is the case)					
	2.36 Other (please state)					

ICT Tools template

ICT Tool	Phase of the process where used					Objectives and description of how used
	1	2	3	4	5	
				not started		
3.1 Questionnaire						
3.2 Opinion polls						
3.3 3D landscape scale model						
3.4 More general maps (aerial photos, satellite imagery, perspective views)	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.5 Paper model (e.g. diagram, mental map, actor mapping, systematic poll, etc.)	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops

3.6 Movie						
3.7 Role game						
3.8 Board game						
3.9 Internet (if used for two-way communication, e.g. electronic poll, on-line meeting)	X	X				Used in one-way, to share information Interactive forum on the web site, but not used by the stakeholders
3.10 Interactive board (to display digital information, record writing/drawing)	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.11 Information system (tool to organise the information)	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.12 Spreadsheet (e.g. Excel)	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.13 GIS	X	X				Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.14 Visualization tool	X	X	X			Used only by the technicians during the preparation of the workshops
3.15 Scenario tools						
3.16 Multicriteria analysis tool						
3.17 Simulation tool						
3.18 Decision support system						