

Soils2Sea: Future governance approaches for reducing excess nutrients at local farm scale - Your voice.

11th December 2014 | Dolcan Hotel Częstochowa - Witamy

ul. Św. Rocha 224 | 42-200 Częstochowa
Thursday, 11th December 2014

Programme	
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9:30 a.m.	Welcome Coffee
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Welcome & quick introductory round <i>Prof. Grzegorz Malina (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Fizyki i Informatyki Stosowanej)</i>
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Presentation on Water Issues <i>Prof. Grzegorz Malina (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Fizyki i Informatyki Stosowanej)</i> Discussion
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Presentation Soils2Sea Project <i>Dr. Przemysław Wachniew (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Fizyki i Informatyki Stosowanej)</i> Discussion
12:30 p.m.	Lunch Break
1:30 – 2:00 p.m.	Setting the Scene: Stakeholders in Soils2Sea, background information for World Café Method & maybe little background information on governance instruments <i>Prof. Grzegorz Malina/Dr. Przemysław Wachniew (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Fizyki i Informatyki Stosowanej)</i>
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.	World Café Round <i>Table 1: Role of agriculture and waste water for water quality</i> <i>Table 2: How can different actors contribute to ameliorate the water quality?</i> <i>Table 3: How can implementation of regulation be strengthened?</i>
3:30 – 3:45 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:45 – 4:15 p.m.	Rapporteurs report back to Plenum
4:15 – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up & closing <i>Prof. Grzegorz Malina/Dr. Przemysław Wachniew (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Fizyki i Informatyki Stosowanej)</i>
4:30 p.m.	End of the workshop

Summary of the workshop.

Introduction

The first Soils2Sea workshop in the Polish case study region was held on the 11th December 2014. It was held in Częstochowa, near the river Kocinka. The workshop was attended by project partners from Soils2Sea, members from the environmental agency of Kłobuck County (powiat kłobucki), representatives from a fisheries-association, as well as actors from the community Mykanow, who had previously participated in an ethnographic study in Poznan, Poland in October 2014. Among this latter group were farmers and other stakeholders, including from the Water Works in Częstochowa. A total of 12 people attended the workshop.

In the first part of the workshop, two presentations were held. Prof. Grzegorz Malina focused on general water issues, Dr. Przemysław Wachniew (both from the University of Krakow) presented the Soils2Sea approach.



World-Café

For the second part of the meeting, the 'World-Café' method was used. The group was split around three coffee-tables, with discussions at each table focusing upon a different issue. The first table discussed issues about the role of agriculture and waste water for water quality, focusing on three sub-questions:

Q1: *In your opinion, what is the role of agriculture for (surface) water quality?*

A few positive aspects were mentioned but not further discussed, with participants focusing instead on negative impacts. These impacts depend on the type and size of activity that is undertaken. Additionally, the impacts always relate to the awareness and education level of each farmer.

Q2: *In your opinion, what is the role of waste water for (surface) water quality?*

Again, the participants focused more on negative impacts. The impacts depend upon certain issues:

- centralised vs. individual sewage systems and wastewater treatment plants,
- composition of wastewater (culture and environmental awareness of users),
- difficulty of controlling individual systems (culture and environmental awareness of users).

Q3: *In your opinion, which other sectors and/or practices contribute to the (good/bad) status of (surface) water quality?*

The participants named a list of different issues contributing to negative impacts on water quality: Local industries (including the food industry), agricultural devices & machines (service and exploitation), transport (local and regional), emissions to the air from individual farms/private houses (inappropriate fires/furnaces, burning/combustion of low quality fuels and waste materials), and wild dumping sites (landfills). All these factors can contribute to a certain degree to a negative status of water quality.

As a main conclusion drawn from this first table is that, in general, agricultural activities have a negative impact on the water quality. The degree of the negative impact strongly depends on the environmental awareness and education as well as the farming culture of the farmers.



The second table dealt with the issue of how different actors can contribute to ameliorating water quality. The table again was divided by sub-questions:

Q1: *Which management practices to ameliorating water quality have you been using or are you planning to use?*

Depending on the background of the participants, different approaches were discussed. Being active in ecological NGOs or fishing associations was mentioned. Also ecological education in kindergarten and schools is one route to ameliorate water quality. Households not connected to the community sewage system can build household sewage treatment plants (instead of using septic tanks) or use biodegradable material for the septic tanks.

Q2: *What were your (positive/negative) experiences with the implemented management practices?*

On a positive note, it was mentioned that there is knowledge available about water quality and how to improve it. People now have the opportunity and possibility to treat household waste water. Farmers, in order to receive subsidies, must follow certain rules that improve water quality. On the negative side, these opportunities are not yet fully used. This may have something to do with habits that are not so easily changed or social behaviour, such as not wanting to accuse neighbours of doing something wrong. Another reason may still be a lack of awareness about how sewage and/or manure can cause a problem for water quality. It was also stated that local government is not always very encouraged or supported in the implementation of environmentally driven processes. When looking water quality in streams and groundwater, a catchment scale approach would be appropriate. But this would require different communities to work together, which costs time and resources.

Q3: *Can you think of any barriers which might exist to the adoption of additional practices?*

Monetary issues were stated to be the main barriers. Without financial support, good practices are not undertaken. Also, for local politicians it is not a priority to support environmental protection programs, since these are not valued by the public. For the farmers, it was stated that clear and integrated actions are missing which could control and monitor farming practice.

Q4: *Can you think of any driving forces which might exist to support the adoption of additional practices?*

This sub-topic can be divided into three different general answers. First, it was mentioned that ecological education for children and adults should be supported by the public sector and the government. Second, ecologically friendly behaviour should be made easier. For example, when installing household sewage treatment plants, less paper work would make implementation easier. The third relates to farmers: more money is needed to improve existing practices or adopt new ones. Currently, farmers can only run their farms with the help of subsidies, leaving no margin to adopt additional practices.

The third table had focused on the question, 'How can implementation of regulation be strengthened?' It had four sub-questions:

Q1: *What is your opinion concerning the level of regulation for the protection of water resources (through waste water and through the agricultural sector)?*

In general laws about water quality are too complicated and awareness in society is low. Additionally, there are too many acts, acts are written in overly complicated language, and there is too much bureaucracy. Participants stated that the environmental regulations in Poland are more restrictive than in the rest of the EU. As a result, people are not very interested in such legal issues. With regards to the enforcement of regulations, it was noted that these are often in the hand of local communities. For example the communes are responsible for establishing sewage systems. It was stated that in some cases, when communes are responsible for the protection of water resources they place responsibility on the district (*powiat*) administration. But it was also stated, that communes are left on their own when it comes to executing the regulations. Concerning environmental regulations, it was said, that these are not very effective because of poor implementation of law. One reason might be that being strict on the regulations might affect the popularity of mayor, thus decreasing their chances for re-election. Another aspect is the lack of consistency and coherence between regulations. For example: there are many definitions of "sewage".

Q2: *What voluntary mechanisms can be most effective in encouraging uptake of different management practices? And why?*

This sub-question led to more questions than answers. It was asked why new mechanisms are needed, who would pay for them, and who would benefit? It was feared that new mechanisms could lead to unnecessary bureaucracy, and that farmers would not understand the ideas (e.g. trading nutrients). Before implementing new ideas, 'old' and commons convictions must be overcome, like the environment being free to use, why pay for wastewater when the air is for free, or that farmers do not pollute the environment. Additionally, implementing new ideas would be difficult because of the land fragmentation in Poland. It was suggested that existing mechanisms should be improved, rather than implementing new ones.

Q3: *Can the current input-based regulation with fertiliser accounts, etc. be replaced by an emission-based regulation, with granted permits for the emission of a certain quantity of nitrates to the aquatic environment?*

Regulations are seen as important in general, a more pressing need is to change the attitude of farmers and local inhabitants. Also, these regulations would only make sense if the changes will bring improvement in the longer run. Implementation would likely require the community to give incentives to the farmers, with money being the most probable, though other options were raised like prizes or coverage in the local media.

Q4: *Should financial support to implement management practices reducing nutrient losses be adopted and in what way? Who should provide financial support (e.g., subsidies, grants, tax credits)?*

In general the participants supported the idea of financial support. But it should be ensured that the money spent brings improvement to the environment. Additionally, social aspects should be considered, such as relates to large families and pensioners needing special support. But financial support is not the only solution, and there are other barriers that need to be overcome. For example, there are legal barriers to connecting private households to a sewage system. The Czestochowa waterworks is working on a scheme to support the house owners.

Summary and Outlook

The aim of this workshop was to introduce the ideas of Soils2Sea to the stakeholders at the local level of the case study site and get their feedback. The constructive working atmosphere of the workshop led to some insights to conduct further work. For example, awareness and education are seen as very important aspects to changing farmers and citizens' attitude and behavior. This result will be taken onward from the project team to work on dissemination strategies.

Due to the time constraints of participants, the wrap-up and reporting of the workshop was relatively short. It was suggested to continue this exchange during the next years, preferably in summer when there is a possibility to also see fields and the river Kocinka.

