

PROTECTION OF DRINKABLE WATER AGAINST DIFFUSE AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION: DIAGNOSTIC AND APPROACHES IN PROTECTED AREAS, STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED. PERSPECTIVES FOR A RESOURCE CENTER

- **ABSTRACT**

Since 2006 law on water and aquatic ecosystems, the policy for protecting drinkable water has been enhanced. This policy establish the main components and the different steps for protecting drinkable water, and ask for defining and implementing an action plan adapted to each catchment. Despite ambitious objectives of the “Grenelle de l’environnement”, this report is based on the general assessment that the local implementation of this policy is difficult, and aims at defining the framework and the main functions for a resource center which help actors to elaborate an efficient drinkable water protection. This report is composed of three different sections: implementation and content of action plans at the national level, for the areas designed as a priority in “Grenelle de l’environnement”; the stakeholders networks involved in elaborating action plans and their needs; the knowledge that is effectively mobilized for defining action plans.

The first part of the report outlines the framework which has been defined for protected areas for drinkable waters. Even if public policy designates local authorities as responsible for the implementation of protection approaches, there is actually an important diversity of stakeholders involved with local authorities, which are mainly: water agencies, departmental and regional administrations, agricultural chambers, consultants, authorities at regional and departmental levels. In addition, it is important to consider that previously defined actions frameworks have been already established and supported by water agencies (territorial contracts) or by regions, that explain the local variability in using locally ZSCE policy tool (areas with environmental restrictions). In this context, 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.

The second part of the report is making an assessment of implementation progress for the 532 protected areas for drinkable water designed as a priority in the “Grenelle de l’Environnement”, and of the content of the action for around sixty protected areas (upon the 332 priority protected areas that have already defined an action plan). As a general rule, assessed action plans are based on regulation models and/or agri-environmental measures. More ambitious and complementary measures – on re-grassing or conversion to organic farming for example - can be included in action plans, but only optionally, that is to say 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 third part of the report analyses the way stakeholders’ networks mobilise or not knowledge that could be useful for defining efficient actions. 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 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 working on protection approaches will be looking for, more or less actively, mobilising 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.

The fourth part relies on this analysis, and proposes a framework for a water resource center to support efficient action plan in protected areas for drinkable water. Four functions have been identified: (1) facilitate networking and coordination of the different stakeholders for action, (2) disseminate documents and methods in order to improve action plans’ efficiency, (3) provide specific support to local authorities, (4) set-up an information system based on local stakeholders’ needs. The report proposes an organization and structure as well the main tasks on short term to contribute to these functions.

- **KEY WORDS (THEMATIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA)**

Water protected areas, agricultural diffuse pollution, resource center, drinkable water, action plans, stakeholders’ networks, ZSCE (Areas with environmental restrictions), environmental efficiency, France.