



GOOD PRACTICE

Title of the practice

International institutional cooperation on operational level in the River Basin Meuse

Detailed description of the practice



The water partners in the River Basin Meuse have a long tradition of good collaboration with international neighbors. It's related to the geographical localization: Limburg has long borders with Wallonia, Flanders and Germany and just a short border with the rest of the Netherlands. International collaboration is for this province no sinecure. A bilateral or trilateral cooperation exists on all levels:

- policy developing level, e.g. Vlaams Nederlands Bilaterale Maascommissie (Flemish Dutch Bilateral Meuse Commission),
- operational level, e.g. Beheerdersoverleg (Water managers Meeting),
- thematic working groups, e.g. Werkgroep sedimentbeheer (Working group Sediment management),
- INTERREG-projects, e.g. FLOOD-WISE, AMICE,
- ad hoc bilateral meetings.

The primary scope of these contacts is to exchange knowledge and information about concrete matters or to solve some problems. But apart of this we also invest in the relationship: we get to know each other, learn about each others' mentality, culture, habits and problems. Doing things together, even having fun, or sharing meals, helps enormously to break ice and become close. For instance we organized visits to water managers in the neighboring countries and wrote together articles for professional magazines.

Evidence of success

- By knowing each other better grows the confidence, communication becomes more open and collaboration is more fruitful.
- By meeting each other in an early stage to discuss ideas, the conflicts that may rise in case of confronting each other just with ready-made products, are avoided.
- In addition to national guidelines, coordination and uniformity, room has to be left for regional coordination (within the river basin) and the matching uniformity.

Location of the practice

Country: *Netherlands*

City: *Maastricht*

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