Breakout group 3
Participative approaches
Synthesis

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„The most difficult task when implementing ecological networks is to overcome the barriers in people's minds"

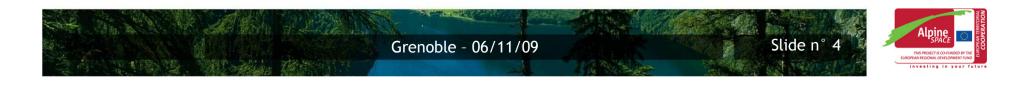Chris Walzer, leadpartner ECONNECT, at the project kickoff one year ago

- Ecological networks: many sectors and persons concerned, many questions, complex organisation

→ At some stages of the process participatory approaches have to be used

- Obligations from „above" (EU), expectations from the bottom

- Classical methods do not work, new ways of decision making are needed → challenge for responsible persons

Basic questions:

- At what time of the implementation process participatory approaches should be applied?

- What degree of involvement is necessary and most promising?

- What can be the obstacles?

- What makes the success?

→ Recommendations how participatory approaches can support implementation of ecological networks on a regional level
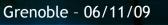
Levels of participatory approaches

1. Information: e.g. leaflet, press release
2. Consultation: e.g. public hearing, questionnaire
3. Co-determination: e.g. mediation procedure

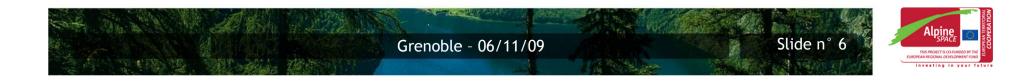Participation can concern all types of stakeholders or the general public

Three case studies of participatory approaches

Participatory processes during the setting up of the corridor project in the Grésivaudan valley (Murielle Pezet-Kuhn, Grenoble Urbanism Agency)

Stakeholders contributions to the mapping of ecological networks in Rhone-Alpes Region (Laure Belmont, Asconit consultancy)

stakeholder involvement in an ECONNECT pilot region with the example of the Northern limestone Alps region (Lisbeth Zechner, National Park Gesäuse)

A methodological summary and guideline

Guidelines for involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks (Lawrence Jones-Walters, European Centre for Nature Conservation)

Experiences and thoughts of further 13 participants

Participatory processes during the setting up of the corridor project in the Grésivaudan valley

2001: ecological network of Isere department: map with 10 prioritary sites among which Grésivaudan valley (18 municipalities), showing corridors

Aim: define corridors to be restored and measures

Situation analysis: literature review, field data, local knowledge (expert interviews)

2 Steering committees to accompany and validate steps: 5 meetings each, wide composition, presided by political decision makers
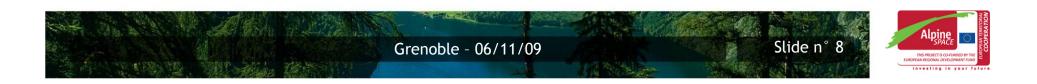
Thematical working groups (waterways, agriculture, …)

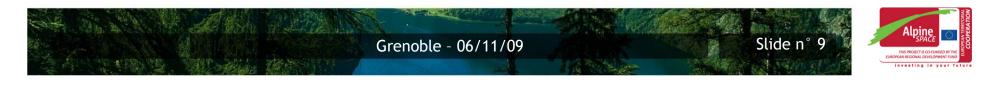Neutral support by Urbanism Agency

Steering committee:

Definition of common vision and goals

Not only biodiversity, also other benefits (road safety, water quality, leisure, …) → holistic vision

Find a common language: what is a corridor?

Agree on method to apply (pragmatic solution of multifunctional corridors)

Result: network of functional corridors

Need for action! → European project to help CG38 associate large number of partners
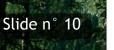
European project: Corridors of life

Join very different actors (public, private, associations) around a same objectif

Set a time frame

Find financing

Fix those who implement

Stakeholder involvement

Formalise engagement with conventions, letters of support

Animate municipalities within meetings to act (fix corridors in spatial planning documents, inform population, implement measures, …)

Lessons learnt

- Involve stakeholders needs a lot of time (esp. individual consultations)
- Political support is essential
- Involve those stakeholders who are concerned
- Build up multipliers
- Find convincing arguments
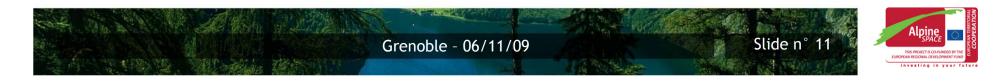- Formalise decisions
- Inform large public

Stakeholders contributions to the mapping of ecological networks in Rhone-Alpes Region

18 months, result: Cartography 1/100.000 covering 45.000 km^2

Stakeholder involvement at several steps
Wide steering committee (monitoring, validation, whole process)

1. Face to face interviews (experts, partner organisations): data? Vision? Expectations? ; followed by cartography

Problem: time consuming

Results: → local knowledge gathered, awareness raised (shared goals, common understanding)

2. Cartography improvements through expert judgment ("personalisation" of cartography) → face to face interviews on the base of documents, a few multi player meetings

Problems: long process, documents difficult to understand, conflicts between actors (existed before), multi player meetings impede free expression
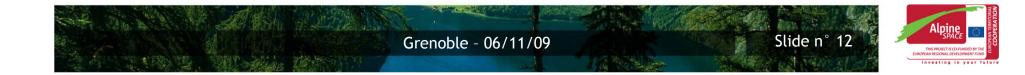
Lessons learnt:

preparation needs enough time and effort: general meeting for common understanding, test period for method (understandable?)

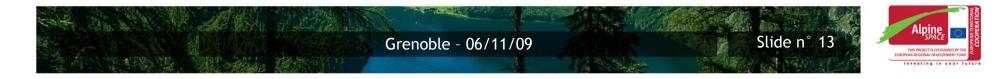Professional presentation of documents and communication

Clear roles (joint design? Validation?)

Stakeholder analysis

3. Area specific workshops

Get corrections / additional information, identification of priorities

8 meetings (10-25 persons, 71 organisations)

Results: more data, players network, non spatial information (comments)

Problems: wrong meeting moment, inputs not corresponding to methodological requirements

Lessons learnt:

Local players need time for « maturation », raised interest, more confidence

Result needs further work to make it homogenous

After end of the process:

Not frustrate participants: continuously inform about further proceeding and what happened with their inputs

Stakeholder participation in the ECONNECT pilot region Northern Limestone Alps

Process managed by a National Park

Start workshop: INFORMATION (flyer) & CONSULTATION

Information events in the 3 provinces: INFORMATION

Interviews and talks with 170 stakeholder from the pilot region: CONSULTATION → habitats for ecological connectivity, prioritise measures, find partners

Upcoming: Presentation of results (information), working groups on habitats and communication (co-determination, consultation), selection of partners and cooperation (co-determination), information to wide public

Success

- Small groups and short meetings for regional information events
- Interviews: opinion and local knowledge
- Co-operation with existing structures, e.g. office for regional development

Problems

- no clear convincing message within ECONNECT
- participatory approach too late
- People are sick of projects/working groups/meetings – need of practical approach, implementation
- General problems/refusal of "nature conservation" (Natura 2000, etc.)
- Existing prejudices/experiences on projects in Austria: e.g. Brown bear – hunters - WWF

Guidelines for involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks

SPEN: Policy – spatial planning across Europe

KEN: Practice – implementation across Europe

→ Spatial planning should play a crucial role in the implementation of ecological networks on the ground

→ Guideline „Making the connection"
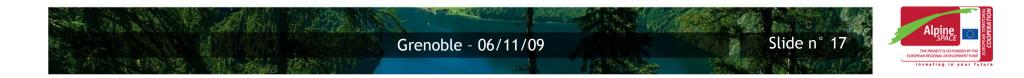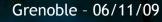
Preparation

- Check added value of participatory approach
- Ensure resources (time, money, logistics)
- Clear goals
- Situation analysis
- Check of available instruments
- Aware of boundaries
- Conscient of barriers between people
- Strong guidance and effective leadership and dynamic project planning and management
- no universal recipes but tailored approaches and unique solutions

Information

Professionality: Have enough background knowledge when engaging with stakeholders

use/ integrate local knowledge and experience

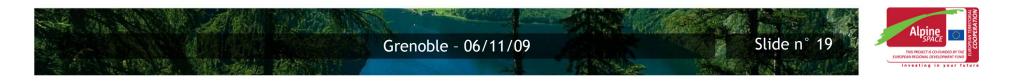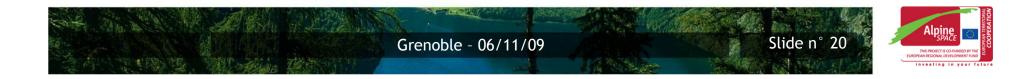A sound ecological underpinning is essential

Analysis

- Strategic stakeholder involvement: "INVOLVE ONLY WHO YOU HAVE TO".

- Create strategic partnerships with trusted and influential stakeholders "POWERFUL FRIENDS"

- involve key stakeholders from an early stage

- Inform and consult secondary stakeholders at an early stage (planning) and keep informed throughout the process

- Get aware of existing former conflicts between stakeholders

Communication

- Communication plan, adapted and tailored to stakeholder groups

- Visualising tools: maps, good stories, flagship species, field trips, logo

- Explain opportunities and relation to previous and other approaches

- Creative, professional

- Flexibility: Adaptation of the strategy during process

Consultation

- Choose the right approach for each stakeholder group
- equal access to information, don't withhold information
- An early start of consultation might enhance voluntary compliance
- Efficiency: precise questions, quick feedbacks

Participation

- Define and agree rules of the game
- Listen to people
- Shared needs
- Mediation, equal participation, balanced groups
- Objective: Separate the people from the problems
- Communicate limits of the process (time, money, preconditions)
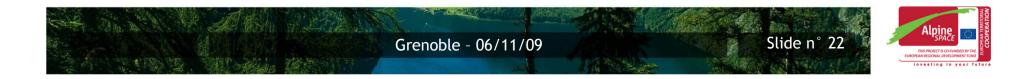- Building trust
- Face to face contacts

Critical success factors group brainstorming (1)

Every participant must know why he/she is involved (validation, information etc)

Arrange creative campaigns to involve people and increase motivation (e.g. photo competition)

Bring people together with the same motivation and mobilisation towards the problem

To have a very competent and qualified person leading the process „neutral project manager"

To have „same words in your head"

Composition of groups balanced according to comfort/culture

Cary our very (time) efficient process: precise questions, quick feedback

To be attentive, to listen – visible from your response (e.g. what he/she said is in your map)

Critical success factors group brainstorming (2)

- Arrange field trips to see directly
- To define clear goals
- To define and agree „the rules of the game" so everybody knows
- To have the time
- Relations of the persons present in the room
- Important in process to find time for 1-1/face-to-face – not just rely on group participation
- Location easy to be there
- Powerful friends
- Neutral, happy mediator/facilitator, somebody who is not identified with anybody
- Involve stakeholders with positive experience of other projects
- To show people that they can have advantage – win-win
- Degree of personal involvement compared to job - direct impact on individual