

Advancing MAPs as vehicles for resolving issues on drinking water pollution from agriculture



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With the aim of critically assessing the engagement processes in a multi-actor context, we harvest lessons from the participants in ten of FAIRWAY's multi-actor platforms (MAPs). We map opportunities and bottlenecks for meaningful engagement, shed light on challenges and how they have been addressed, and explore the future sustainability of the engagement platforms beyond the lifetime of the project.

Issues of trust between participants and actors is flagged as a cross-cutting issue, relating to all other dimensions of engagement, requiring facilitation and long-term commitment. Across the project, the MAPs seem successful in creating arenas for dialogue and exchange of information and viewpoints.

However, three years into the project many of the MAPs are still short of seeing real impact of the processes in terms of reaching established goals. There is evidence from some MAPs that the lack of impact might jeopardise the engagement processes, creating disappointment or fatigue on the part of the participating actors.

It is reported that building relationships and fostering good relations and common understanding requires long-term commitment and takes time. When coupled with awareness-raising amongst key actors, it also takes time for change to take place, for instance the changing of farming practices. Voluntariness in terms of implementation of measures is considered something that can help in the trust-building process, but that also constitutes a barrier for effective implementation.

There are also apparent differences in perspectives within the MAPs, on whether the facilitation of dialogues is to be considered a success-factor in itself, or whether success only can be determined when there are real impacts with reference to set goals.



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