

POLAND

Main results of the focus groups in case area Kutno powiat

- Identification of institutional and cognitive barriers for introduction of any new, more holistic approach concerning water management in agriculture/farm level,
- Identification of main challenges for reaching objectives as set the Waterdrive project,
- Draft of terms of references for new type of advisory services developed and discussed with all relevant for piloting actors,

Main tasks/goals of the focus groups

- To identify level of awareness/understanding of key issues relating to water management in agriculture/farming practices amongst farmers' communities and agricultural advisors,
- To have better understanding/real picture of tasks/roles of all relevant actors involved in water management at local/regional levels,
- To identify key areas for options of tangible improvements (including potential investment opportunities) at local/regional level based on active involvement of all relevant actors.

Strategic planning of focus groups (what to do when and how?)

General approach is based on logic of intervention starting from needs/expectations identification at national/regional levels through focusing activities at regional/local level up to bottom-up locally based actions. The key contextual aspect is to streamline all the Waterdrive projects activities in the wider framework of Polish and EU strategies/policy objectives.

Focus group meeting 1

Questionnaire for agricultural advisors from four Polish regions regarding needs/expectations concerning water management in agriculture/farm level.

Time schedule: February 2019/March 2019

The main purpose of the activity - The main task was to have better understanding of perception of the most important issues relating to water management in agriculture/farm production level as perceived by leading regional agricultural advisors specializing in topics relating to agri-environmental.

Participants (at least the stakeholder categories) - The questionnaire were returned from over 15 agricultural advisors from four regions of Poland: lubelskie, łódzkie, wielkopolskie, kujawsko-pomorskie.

Main inputs made for the future work in the case area

- Growing concern regarding limited access to water in agriculture due to droughts,
- No clear pictures how agricultural advisors might alleviate drought related problem at farms'

level,

- It is result of focusing agricultural advisors work at issues related purely to assisting farmers' in applying for EU subsidies, farms' productivity and fulfilling by farmers all regulatory obligation imposed on them,
- Very vague information/aweranness regarding network of other relevant actors having impact on water management in agriculture/farms' level (Polskie Wody arrange meetings with farmers, provide some money for drainage maintenance cost – only second hand information without any more technical details.
- Overall pictures: lack of clear idea what is role field agricultural advisors versus increasing problem related to drought.

What we learned from the focus groups meeting

- To carry our next round of questionnaire at later stage of the Waterdrive project implementation, particularly in view of: 1) provide more analytical information for WP4, 2) ongoing evaluation of the project work.

Possible actions and improvements before and during next meeting

- methodological consideration of questionnaire structure (relationship between open question providing only general picture without indication suggested actions and close/menu structure questions – compromise between getting new information and risk of suggesting some not necessary realistic proposal leading to raising expectations).

Focus group meeting 2

The Waterdrive kick-off meeting in Łódź.

Time schedule - 13 June 2019

The main purpose of the meeting - To present overall Waterdrive projects objectives at regional kick-off meeting.

Participants (at least the stakeholder categories) - all relevant actors representing local and regional levels.

Main inputs made for the future work in the case area

- Confirmation of the Waterdrive Polish team research analytical works – fragmentation of the current Polish system of water management – there was not dialogue between participants, rather set of monologues seeing the main problem from different perspectives,
- Overall confirmation of the main challenge – growing problem with access to water resources for agriculture and farming,
- Substantial openness for new proposals of activities at loca/farm/agricultural advisors aimed at better management of water resources for agricultural purposes,
- Confirmed need for new type agricultural advisory service or at least for amending scope of activities of existing network of field agricultural advisors,
- Key challenge – how to define scope of reference on new type agricultural advisory services while directly referring to knowledge and skills of currently employed agricultural advisors.

What we learned from the focus groups meeting

- All planned objectives reached,
- To work out specific proposal/s for participants to move forward potential activities at local/regional levels.

Possible actions and improvements before and during next meeting

- To introduce examples of Polish case studies of locally/regionally based on multi-actors activities to facilitate more practical discussion between all relevant actors.

Focus group meeting 3

Ongoing consultation with management of four regional agricultural advisory services across Poland..

Time schedule – August 2019 - now (ongoing activities).

The main purpose of the consultation process: to define – a) Scope of work agricultural advisors involved in the Waterdrive project (one advisor per region), b) Identification of advisors having appropriate skills to cooperate with the Waterdrive project (CDR).

Participants (at least the stakeholder categories) – management of regional agricultural advisory services involved in the pilot activities.

Main inputs made for the future work in the case area

- To have mutual understanding of the Waterdrive project objectives, role of the pilot area and specifically agricultural advisors participating in activities in all pilot areas,
- To have more in-depth understanding how to introduce effectively new scope of agricultural advisory services into the current institutional and professional framework of delivery of agricultural advisory services in Poland (taking into account regional differences).

What we learned from the focus groups meetings

- Challenge no 1 – how to overcome current cognitive and knowledge/skills gap between the current mode of agricultural advisory services provision and future, more holistic approach required by new approach to water management issue in agriculture/farm level, ‘
- Challenge no 2 – to what extent the Waterdrive project activities limited activities can influence wider institutional and legal network of actors involved beyond local levels (regional, national).

Possible actions and improvements to make the collaborative work continue (if needed)

- No need for any direct action. This is a routine activities within the wider scope of cooperation between CDR and 16 regional centers of agricultural advisory services.

Focus group meeting 4

Marszew, Płońsk, Modliszewice – meetings with representatives of agricultural advisory services, farmers and researchers to discuss new type of advisory service (meeting arranged within the scope of statutory tasks of CDR).

Time schedule – 21/22 October 2019, 07/08 November 2019, 28/29 November 2019.

The main purpose of the consultation process: to review considered under the Waterdrive project proposal regarding new type of advisory services into general structure of planned initiatives under new programming period after 2020.

Participants (at least the stakeholder categories) – agricultural advisors, farmers, researchers from scientific agricultural institutes and universities,

Main inputs made for the future work in the case area (minutes and resume of meeting)

- General agreement for widening scope of agricultural advisory services for new type agricultural advisor focus on more holistic approach to water management,
- Confirmation of existing knowledge/skills gap amongst currently employed agricultural advisors and requirements set for new type of advisory,
- Lack of capacity amongst agricultural universities to provide required for new type of advisory training in the near future,
- Lack of proper financial support for investment in water management in agriculture/farming, although there has been some positive trends within the last year due to growing problem related to droughts,
- Lack of unified approach at national level regarding data collection and analyses on water management in agriculture as they are collected/analyses/disseminated by different actors without appropriate coordination.

What we learned from the focus groups meetings

- Challenge no 1 – how to overcome current cognitive and knowledge/skills gap between the current mode of agricultural advisory services provision and future, more holistic approach required by new approach to water management issue in agriculture/farm level, ‘
- Challenge no 2 – to what extent the Waterdrive project activities limited activities can influence wider institutional and legal network of actors involved beyond local levels (regional, national).

Possible actions and improvements to make the collaborative work continue (if needed)

- There is no plan to continue meeting within the same structure.

Results (actions, measures, ideas, products, etc)

Main challenges for the Waterdrive projects identified:

- Challenge no 1 – how to overcome current cognitive and knowledge/skills gap between the current mode of agricultural advisory services provision and future, more holistic approach required by new approach to water management issue in agriculture/farm level, ‘
- Challenge no 2 – how to overcome existing institutional fragmentation regarding water management in agriculture,
- Challenge no 3 – how to overcome existing lack of unified approach at national level regarding data collection and analyses on water management in agriculture,
- Challenge no 4 – to what extent the Waterdrive project activities limited activities can influence wider institutional and legal network of actors involved beyond local levels (regional, national).

Conclusions

The main challenge for the Waterdrive project in pilot area:

How to inbuild locally/regionally based projects activities/products (new type of agricultural advisory services, multiactors activities involving planners, farmers) into wider existing institutional and knowledge national structures to create:

- a) Successful example of good practices of multiactors activities at local/regional level focus on improvement of water management in agriculture/farm level,
- b) Development of set of recommendations for decision makers for improvement of national policies on water management in agriculture/farm level.

Action plan for the remaining activities in pilot area designed, discussed and approved by all relevant actors (inside and outside Polish members of the Waterdrive project consortium).