

Policy Brief: Tailored stakeholder engagement



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Key messages

- Integrating and adapting stakeholder engagement in flood risk management is a necessity to ensure uptake and understanding of information such as flood risk maps, vulnerability assessments and early warning systems.
- Identifying and engaging with stakeholders requires a structured system or framework. However, there is no "one-size-fits-all" methodology to actively involve stakeholders; different actors require different tools to address their needs and the context.
- The process of stakeholder engagement needs to be adaptive to the past and current experiences in the target region. This means being aware and responsive to stakeholder fatigue, social and cultural sensitivities, politics and priorities.
- Having in place processes and mechanisms for effective stakeholder engagement is a prerequisite for broad ownership of development. Their weakness or absence results in reduced mobilization of available resources, diminished development impacts and frustration for citizens and stakeholders about the potential for meaningful engagement.
- Stakeholder participation does not automatically happen. To encourage participation in research and innovation projects, there is also the need to make stakeholder engagement a current social practice, which people are able to understand, support and practically experience.

1 Background/context

This policy brief examines the approaches to tailoring stakeholder engagement to improve and direct the development of outputs from PEARL. The types of engagement was shaped by context from collaborative Learning Action Alliance (LAA) workshops to identify and understand flood risks to focused co-development of early warning systems with key government agencies. Stakeholders have been involved from the outset of PEARL and are identified as part of the team. The success of various tailored approaches to stakeholder engagement across PEARL case studies holds important lessons for future initiatives. It is also the key to ensuring uptake, increasing ownership and creating sustainability beyond the project.

The policy brief is based on the following information:

- Deliverable 5.1 - A framework for stakeholder analysis and engagement when preparing for extreme and rare events in Coastal Regions. Authors: Linda Sorg, Tobias Blätgen, Jörn Birkmann (IREUS), Patricia Gourgoura, Archontia Lykou, Christos, Makropoulos (NTUA)
- Milestone 14 - Setting up the PEARL Learning and Action Alliances LAAs. Authors: Tobias Blätgen (UNU), Patricia Gourgoura (NTUA), Archontia Lykou (NTUA)
- Deliverable 5.6 - Risk Management Roadmaps for all case studies
- D6.2 Report - Summary report on EU and international case studies
- Learning action alliance reports and interviews with PEARL Case study areas including:
 - Greece, Rethymno
 - Italy, Genoa
 - Germany, the Elbe Estuary
 - France, Les Boucholeurs
 - Spain, Marbella

1.1 About PEARL

PEARL has developed adaptive risk management strategies for coastal communities against extreme hydro-meteorological events, minimising social, economic and environmental impacts and increasing the resilience of Coastal Regions.

PEARL's objectives include:

- developing a holistic risk governance framework;
- increasing the understanding of dominant root causes of vulnerabilities and risks in coastal regions
- improving the comprehension of the co-evolution of disasters due to extreme hydro-meteorological events;
- developing new monitoring, modelling, forecasting and warning technologies tailored on the social, technical, institutional, organisational and economic realities of coastal communities;
- providing the means to strengthen risk governance and empower all stakeholders; and
- building pan-European knowledge to support capacity development for the delivery of cost-effective risk reduction plans.

1.2 Why is stakeholder engagement important?

The increasing frequency of coastal floods combined rapid urbanization is increasing the risk to economic viability, infrastructure and social well-being, which is further exacerbated by poor governance. Some of the key issues blocking community resilience include slow and un-adaptive communication, problem identification, and decision making processes. As urban flooding is increasing across Europe, there has been a shift from a technocratic, engineered approach to one that is social which requires active stakeholder engagement (Gourgoura et al., 2015).

Stakeholder engagement and public participation have a number of advantages including (Yee, 2010; Dinges et al., 2015):

- Enabling community empowerment and provide the opportunity to develop knowledge for making informed choices;
- Encourages transparency in decision-making processes, and can reduce conflict over decisions;
- Enhancing creativity in design processes such as models and decisions support systems;
- Ensures the likelihood that research and innovation outcomes are more societally relevant and desirable;
- Achieving shorter time to market and greater consumer acceptability of research and innovation outcomes; and
- Fostering a more scientifically literate society of knowledge-driven and empowered citizens.

In relation to dealing with the increased risk of urban flooding due to a variety of factors, feedback from stakeholders on the ground can provide invaluable input into designing and reassessing model-based scenarios. Stakeholders can share knowledge regarding factors that exacerbate their exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards on the one hand, and adaptation options that are relevant to increasing their climate resilience on the other. This can start to inform how factors that especially impact vulnerable populations may relate to structural inequalities that require integrated and coherent policy responses (Sánchez, 2016).

The transition of managing floods solely through engineered solutions to one which encompasses risk assessment with the viewpoints and knowledge of different groups can be through various stakeholder engagement approaches including LAAs, which bring together different perspectives on risk to move from a traditional mind-set to more interactive social learning and collaboration (Ashley et al., 2011).

1.3 What are Learning and Action Alliances?

As decision makers face increasingly complex problems, the process by which they are making decisions often excludes those that will be impacted. Learning Action Alliances (LAAs) open the discussion and decision making process to all entities that are concerned. A LAA is “a group of individuals or organisations with a shared interest in innovation and the scaling-up of innovation, in a topic of mutual interest” (Batchelor and Butterworth, 2008).

LAAs provide a model of informal organisation that can complement formal and institutional arrangements and more importantly, create outcomes that are tailored to the needs of the stakeholders affected by the issues tackled. The main output of LAAs is knowledge, and how this can be successfully applied in complex decision making procedures such as integrated planning. Enhanced cooperation between groups on managing their resource can contribute to future practice-driven policy processes, informed by a process of multi-stakeholder knowledge generation (Van Herk et al., 2011). This knowledge needs to feed into planning and land-use decisions and is the basis of any flood resilient city (Van Herk et al., 2011).

LAAs are built on three types of knowledge and on social learning as a knowledge building process. The three types of knowledge are interrelated threads when establishing a LAA (van Herk et al. 2011):

- i. **To establish facts** - generation of knowledge that: is coherent and not contradictory, has a proven quality and serves to reduce uncertainty and has been established without unacceptable influence from the wishes and opinions of the parties involved;
- ii. **To create images** - supports *frame reflection* where stakeholders identify their perspectives of the situation and create renewed and more creative images as a result of the interaction;
- iii. **To set ambitions** - bringing stakeholders together voluntarily and in a way that they can freely discuss interests and views

The social learning is more results orientated and can be organized for a LAA to : i) analyse and address problems; ii) develop and propose solutions and iii) influence politics by seeking political commitment or bringing participants together (Gourgoura et al., 2015; van Herk et al. 2011). The practical process of setting up a LAA is provided in Figure 1 (Ashley et al., 2012).

LAAs have been applied in a variety of EU projects in Germany, Netherlands, UK, Norway and Sweden, where LAAs were established in order to deal with flood risk or Integrated Water Management. These experiences demonstrated the diverse nature and functionality of the various LAAs, and illustrated that there is not one single format for a LAA, each needs to be locally and contextually grounded and to develop its' own way of working (Dudley et al., 2013). Although all LAAs are unique, they usually have 3 stages including establishment, functioning and sustainability. At each stage the relationship between the established institutional and governance structure (i.e. the formal decision making processes) is important and defines how effective the LAA can be in effecting change (Dudley et al.,

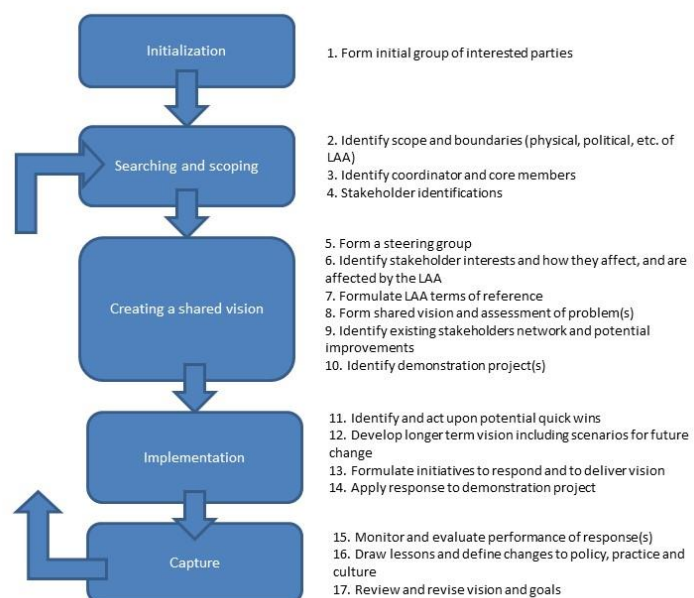


Figure 1. Establishing and running LAAs (Ashley et al., 2012)

2013). The establishment of a LAA is driven by a core group of instigators with a reason to form the LAA. During this phase a vision should be defined. A functioning LAA delivers on this vision which is based on terms of reference, legitimacy, mutual respect and trust. And sustainability means maintaining interest in continuing LAA activity, which is often most successful through a specific project focus (Dudley et al., 2013).

2 Approach and Results

2.1 PEARL Learning Action Alliances

LAAs have been a main cornerstone of PEARL as a bridge between science, politics and key stakeholders to gain insights into local decision making processes, to communicate the constraints, needs and goals of single stakeholder and to reach finally a surrounding that guarantees decisions that are built on a broad discussion on flood management and relative risks in coastal zones.

A PEARL Learning and Action Alliance is a convention of individuals and/or organisations who are involved in or effected by decision making processes and their outcome in the context of coastal risk and/or disaster management, risk related spatial planning or any other political and economic decisions that could alter the group members situation or capacities before, during or after an extreme event.

It has been crucial for the success of PEARL to not only identify the possible involved stakeholders but to actually bring responsible and affected people together, exchange knowledge and build a platform that supports an effective stakeholder engagement and knowledge management throughout future planning processes.

Figure 2 shows the four main components of the PEARL approach for stakeholder analysis and creation of LAA. After analysing the key stakeholders and the establishment of an initial LAA, the aim was to have stakeholders establish facts, create images, and set ambitions, as explained above. The aim of the task was to create a long term vision among all participants and define acceptable levels of risk with the aid of scenarios.

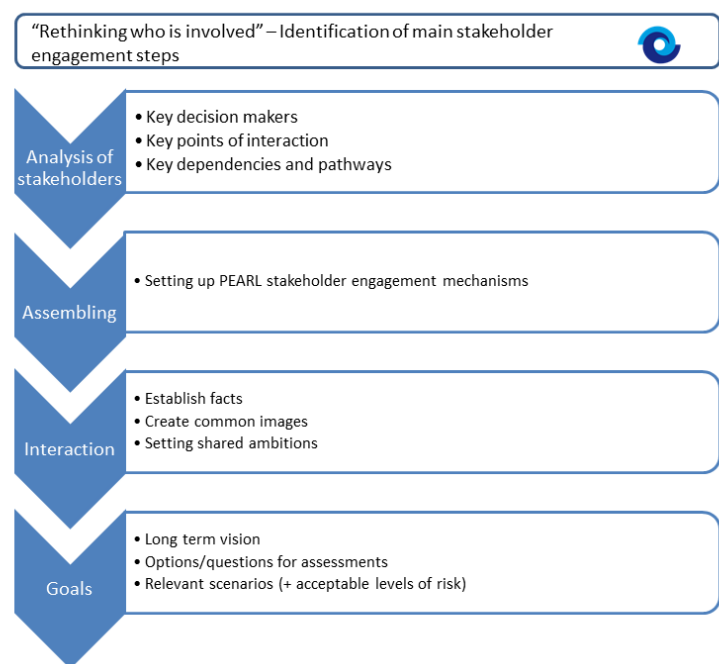


Figure 2. Rethinking who is involved –stakeholder analysis and creation of Learning and Action Alliances (LAAs) for coastal regions

2.2 Tailoring Stakeholder engagement

A tailored approach to engagement was essential from the initial project scoping stage and has shaped the entire development of the PEARL project. There is no single model of an LAA which can be uniformly applied, rather it is necessary to explore and understand local contexts, organisational and institutional structures. Based on this, LAAs can be designed to fit to the current activities and working culture of the stakeholders to be involved (Dudley et al., 2013).

Each of the PEARL case studies (that are working with LAA or equivalent) adapted the LAA to their own context. In some cases there have been challenges beyond the control of the project which have not allowed active consultation despite stakeholders' interest.

The process of setting up the LAA in each case study site was different. For example, the initial structure of the LAA in Rethymo was based on a literature review. At first, technical meetings were carried out with target stakeholders to understand responsibilities and communications around flood management. Most of the organisations contacted were public services so administrative procedures and bureaucracy needed to be taken into consideration. There have been 3 stakeholder workshops with the same attendees participating which is important for continuity, but also shows interest and willingness to engage. This could be because there had been little in the way of participatory processes in Rethymo and even in Crete and Greece, so this was a novel way to engage stakeholders.

2.3 Who are the relevant stakeholders? How are they identified?

In PEARL, there were stakeholders from different levels (European/national/regional/local). Depending on the structure of the LAA, these were brought together. This was often linked to priorities at the national and regional level linked to the local level. However, the focus of each LAA tended to be local.

PEARL implemented a comprehensive approach to identifying stakeholders. First, all potential stakeholders should be listed, both formal institutions (decision makers, consultants, agencies,...), as well as the less obvious groups involved in decision making, for example, in the case of harbours this could be port authorities, marina owners, other enterprises etc. To get an extensive overview of the stakeholders, the snowball technique was used. The core group of key organisations and people were asked to list the stakeholders that are involved from their standpoint as well as willingness to participate, key persons within enterprises or organisations, questions/goals/constraints the stakeholders might have, mapping the key points of interactions between the stakeholders approaches to get insights in the inter-stakeholder activities/situation etc. With this mapping and analysis, the core team could evaluate not only the influence and interest of stakeholders but also the impact the project could bring.

In Rethymo, the process of having technical meetings helped identify the right people with the combination of technical knowledge and power to make decisions. Another asset to the process was having local knowledge as one of the project team was from Rethymo and understood the context and who to speak with. Nonetheless the development of the LAA uncovered authorities and teams that were not highly visible but have valuable knowledge. For example, the previous mayor was in charge during the last flood events and understands the possible impacts.

In Genova, Italy there was collaboration with another EU project, RISC-IT which allowed the lead organisation (GSIG) to deeply involve the Municipality of Genova within PEARL. Collaboration between PEARL and RISC KIT was mainly addressed around the exchange of data and experiences. Whereas in the case of the Elbe Estuary, previous projects had laid the groundwork to effectively engage with key stakeholders and PEARL provided that continuation further building mutual trust and credibility.

3 Lessons Learned on Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 PEARL Case Studies

The Learning Action Alliances developed and applied in PEARL provided an opportunity to effectively communicate PEARL outputs on flood risk management to key stakeholders, and in some case engage them in design and development. This is key to ensuring ownership and continuity. The case studies outlined provide an overview of the context and how the LAA approach was adapted to provide a platform for exchange and discussion. The table below is a summary of the type of engagement in each area and what the next steps are beyond PEARL.

Case study	Type of engagement	Next steps
Rethymo, Greece	3 LAA workshops leading to the development of a viable roadmap for flood risk management with the consensus of most stakeholders	There is agreement that the LAA is useful for cooperation however there is a need for a champion backed by political will.
Genova, Italy	2 formal LAA workshops in collaboration with other initiatives (RISC-KIT and LIFE+IMAGINE) focusing on the needs and expectations of Genova Municipality in managing climate risk, as well as public participation in managing coastal areas	Genova municipality is coordinating the Climate Adaptation Partnership which groups different partners at the EU level. The aim is to establish a group of stakeholders at the local level with specific skills to support climate adaptation. The group can build off the connections and discussion established through the LAA.
The Elbe Estuary, Germany	Previous projects in the area had used the LAA successfully in engaging stakeholders. An adapted LAA model was applied to involve the key stakeholders in the development of the holistic flood risk management practices. This adapted model responded to individual stakeholder needs with the aim of adding value to what has been developed so far.	The plan is to have continued regular meetings with key institutions through other projects which have direct and indirect contact. Future stakeholder engagement will be decided in cooperation with the target stakeholders through a process of reflecting, reviewing and evaluating.
Les Boucholeurs, France	The severe storm Xynthia led to considerable destruction in the area, and the rezoning approach was contentious. Consequently, the LAA approach was more subtle and engagement was through the use of scientific information and data as focus for discussion. Being able to provide results from PEARL such as analysis and maps related to flood resilience to stakeholders through the process developed in this case study has also been successful.	Constant collaboration with stakeholders remains the only way in increasing the risk perception and willingness to accept future flood risk management planning. There is opportunity to build communication paths using PEARL outputs which had a strong emphasis on visual means such as maps that illustrate the risk levels in the area including the risk of storms and destruction.
Marbella, France	The LAA workshops in Marbella were initiated to create interaction between stakeholders, define issues, share knowledge and ambitions. They provided an opportunity to come together around common issues and the main strategies to improve the flood management in Marbella. The following workshop aimed to guide stakeholders in creating a common vision of the flood management of the city using the outputs from PEARL.	The LAA was a basis for laying the groundwork for future collaboration between stakeholders on flood risk management. The process of developing a common vision is an essential prerequisite for ensuring the implementation of new policies and strategies. It also enables people to work together at different scales and across disciplines. And it supports the political will needed to invest in long-term measures.

Rethymno, Crete

Rethymno is the 3rd most populous urban area in Region of Crete in Greece with a population of 32.468 inhabitants (as of census 2011). High winds, sea level change and storm surges result in violent waves which impacts the port facilities and cause erosion and sediment transport. Several engineering measures have been implemented since the last big flood in 1999 (flood control dams, training of streams, and separation of sewerage from drainage network in some parts of the city). Nevertheless, flood problems persist in some areas, which is aggravated by citizen actions, including blocking drainage areas because of odours from drains, illegal dumping of debris in river beds or a lack of knowledge on how to take precautionary measures around construction work, leading to the possibility of construction material to be carried away causing damage and blocking drains during high rainfall events.



Figure 3. LAA workshop in Rethymno, Greece

The LAA in Rethymno Crete was organised by NTUA and aimed at generating and applying knowledge to increase resilience to flood events. The LAA was organized to have a participatory process which focused on establishing facts, create common images and set shared ambitions. The final aim of the LAA was the development of a viable roadmap for flood risk management with the consensus of most stakeholders (Gourgoura et al., 2015).

There were three rounds of technical workshops in Rethymno throughout the project. The main goal for the 1st workshop was to launch the LAA concept, to analyse the key stakeholders that had been identified, to analyse the decision processes, their risk perception and information flows and to identify leverage points and appropriate scales/contexts in which PEARL support would result in the most pronounced impact. At the second workshop, PEARL tools around flood management were demonstrated, and the 3rd LAA event aimed to train locals on the PEARL tools, the design of the city's Roadmap and standardization of LAA, and the presentation of PEARL main outcomes.

Although the reception to the LAA workshops was positive, especially as a means to improve communication between organizations, no clear champions came forward to continue to drive forward the efforts made and harness political will around improving flood management. Part of the issue is that there are so many priorities that the city needs to address, with understaffing and limited budget. Further, flooding and its impacts tend to be short-lived and the flood management in Greece and in Rethymno is focused on post-disaster management. There is agreement that the LAA is useful for cooperation however there is a need for a champion backed by political will. Outside organisations to government are often needed to catalyse this type of cross departmental engagement and cooperation.

Genova, Italy

Genova is the capital of Liguria region in Italy, with approximately 600,000 inhabitants and is home to the country's largest sea port. The focus area in the PEARL project was on the coast and the Bisagno river basin. Extreme events include heavy precipitation, cyclones, flash floods, pluvial and coastal floods as well as a combination of these floods. Localized extreme precipitation is produced by large-scale flow interaction with the regional topography. Recently Genova was hit by two major flash floods in November 2011 and October 2014, both resulting in fatalities, displacement of people and high financial damage.



Figure 4. Map showing the PEARL and RISC-Kit case study locations

Meetings with local stakeholders were organized by GISIG in collaboration with Fondazione CIMA (the research centre of National Civil Protection in Italy and part of the RISC KIT project¹). Fondazione CIMA is a key stakeholder as they are associated with emergency planning and management within the municipality of Genova. The initial LAA meetings were informal with a few select stakeholders to foster interest and were followed by official meetings with the municipality of Genova. The first LAA set up a dialogue with the Municipality to align PEARL

activities with real needs and expectations of Genova Municipality. The second workshop emphasised public participation in managing coastal areas and was in connection with the LIFE+IMAGINE² project as it had similar stakeholders and a focus on coastal governance.

Based on the initial LAA meetings, PEARL worked with the Municipality and University of Genova to carry out household interviews as part of a vulnerability assessment. The survey was an opportunity to also diffuse knowledge and information material on the regional early warning system.

The LAAs in Genova brought forward an interest in the social dimensions around coastal resilience. Scientific results are plentiful; however there is real added value of understanding social perceptions including information on vulnerability and risk. GISIG and partners are keen to continue in this direction to include a wider understanding of both vulnerability and risk. There are opportunities as the municipality has received the coordination of the Climate Adaptation Partnership which groups different partners at the EU level.

The main challenges are ensuring continued engagement with the Municipality of Genoa to incorporate PEARL outputs. There is high potential as the municipality as received the coordination of the Climate Adaptation Partnership which groups different partners at the EU level. The aim is to establish a group of stakeholders at the local level with specific skills. GISIG will take part in the Climate local stakeholder panels that are going to be organized in the framework of the Climate Adaptation Partnership of the Urban Agenda, as expert in local geo-spatial data and their application for environmental assessment.

The Elbe Estuary, Germany,

The German case study area is located in the Estuary of the River Elbe with the emphasis on its largest urban areas being the City of Hamburg. Extreme hydro-meteorological events can occur in this area due to multiple causes (mainly storm surges and heavy precipitation), which lead to failure of the flood protection infrastructure.

¹ RISC-KIT (Resilience-Increasing Strategies for Coasts- Toolkit which aims to deliver a set of open-source and open-access methods, tools and management approaches to improve DRR strategies and measures within European coastal areas (<http://www.risckit.eu/>).

² LIFE+IMAGINE implements an infrastructure based on web services for environmental analysis, integrating in its own architecture specifications and results from INSPIRE, SEIS and GMES/Copernicus (www.life-imagine.eu).

Previous projects in the area had used the Learning Action Alliance successfully in engaging stakeholders. The target groups are well aware and engaged in the flood situation in the Elbe Estuary and are the knowledge holders of the past and current issues. Consequently, to avoid stakeholder fatigue an adapted LAA model was applied to the Elbe Estuary case in order to involve the key stakeholders in the development of the holistic flood risk management practices. The case study partner (TUHH) found that stakeholders wanted clarification on how they would benefit, and how would the project provide something tangible to address ongoing problems on flood risk. The approach included a (1) stakeholder analysis, (2) a tailored approach to the selected stakeholder groups and individuals addressing their specific interest through face to face sessions, and (3) towards joint planning bringing together the stakeholder interactions to effectively address flood risk.

The face to face meetings aimed to continuously identify and reassess the needs and interests, barriers or potential clustering of the key stakeholders based on their interests and current activities. The meetings were also an opportunity to communicate and present PEARL outcomes and actively involve them in the design of methods and tools, which led to increasing interest for further collaboration. The process had a snowballing character as TUHH could motivate additional institutions to actively contribute to PEARL such as the Ministry for Interior Affairs. The process of co-creation of tools around a common problem has been a key to creating continued engagement. Furthermore, the mutual trust credibility as a partner and reliability in delivery has been important for continued stakeholder collaboration. This has been created through previous projects and maintained in PEARL.

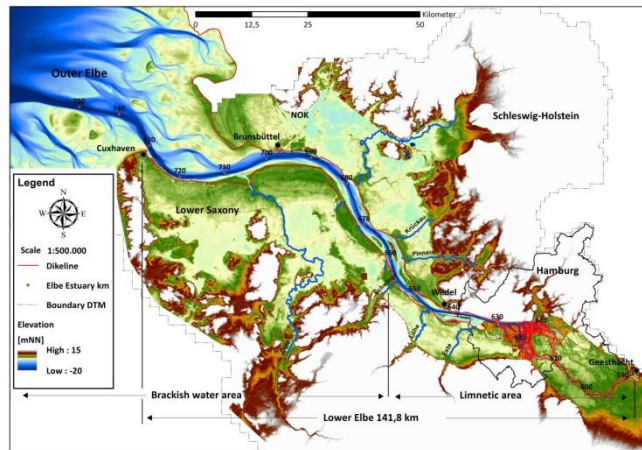


Figure 5. Map of the Lower Elbe

Les Boucholeurs, France

“Les Boucholeurs” is a district of Châtelailon-Plage located on the limit of Yves. The district has with approximately 600 households, many of which are involved in oyster and mussel farming.

The Atlantic coast where this district is located is threatened by storm surges and potential sea level rise, which contribute to the failure of embankments leading to flooding in low-lying areas. The area was severely hit during the Xynthia Storm in 2010 resulting in 1.4 billion Euros of damages in the Charente-Maritime department and 53 fatalities in France. After the event, the risk zone was remodified to level black which meant that everything houses demolished and people resettled. This would have hugely impacted the local community who would not have only lost their livelihoods and property, but also their sense of place by being relocated. Active participation from local stakeholders has changed the zoning to “Orange or Yellow Area” enabling reconstruction and a plan for protection measures including creation of breakwaters and reinforcement of dikes, etc.

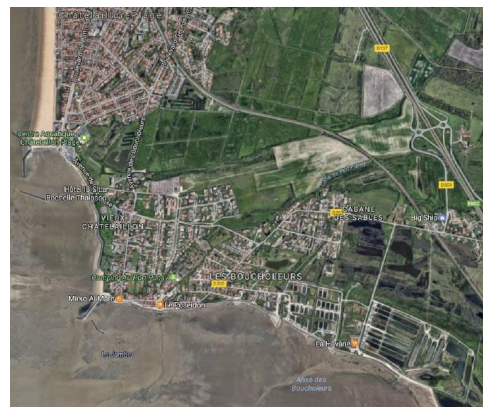


Figure 6. Aerial view of Les Boucholeurs

Due to the sensitivity around rezoning, the LAA approach led by the Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis was more subtle than in other case studies. Engagement was through the use of scientific information and data as a focus for discussion. Being able to provide results from PEARL such as analysis and maps related to flood resilience to stakeholders through the process developed in this case study has also been successful. Constant collaboration with stakeholders remains the only way in increasing the risk perception and willingness to accept future flood risk management planning.

Marbella, Spain

Marbella is a city in the province of Malaga, region of Andalucia in Spain in an area known as the “Costa del Sol”. The city has 138,679 inhabitants (2015) with a population density of almost 1,200 people/km². The city is between a small mountain range and the sea; however the case study focused on the city centre where there are two main streams, Represa channel and Huelo River.

The main flood challenges that threaten Marbella are due to its topography which includes extensive coastal plains and high mountains, which means there are short rivers along the city, with steep banks which are at risk of flash floods. High intensity precipitation and strong storms result in urban flood events with little warning; therefore there is significant runoff which cannot be managed by the existing drainage network. These flash floods pose a serious threat to people and their livelihoods, as well as property and infrastructure.



Figure 7. LAA workshop in Marbella, Spain

The LAA workshops in Marbella were led by CETaqua and initiated to create interaction between stakeholders, define issues, share knowledge and ambitions. It also provided an opportunity to come together around common issues and the main strategies to improve the flood management in the city. The method used was intensive rather than extensive in the form of a one day event in order to ensure the maximum participation of the local stakeholders and to facilitate the participation of entities from other municipalities. The following workshop aimed to guide stakeholders in creating a common vision of the flood management of the city using the outputs from PEARL.

3.2 How can PEARL stakeholder engagement inform policy?

Stakeholder engagement has been a key element of PEARL to involve local authorities in the development of tools for flood planning and risk assessment. A recommendation is to consider innovative approaches for stakeholder involvement around the EU Flood Directive so people can engage and understand the science and its applicability in practice.

The process of continued engagement enables development of a risk culture which means that people will be more resilient in the face of the next flooding event. Specifically the LAA approach has proved to be a novel way to intrigue stakeholder interest which is collaborative and interactive. It can also be the basis for building mutual trust. The LAA approach of course needs to adapt to the context taking into account issues such as stakeholder fatigue, sensitivities around rezoning, and collaboration with other projects.

The experiences across the case studies can provide examples to future EU initiatives on how to carry out public consultations and inputs on urban flood risk management. This includes the preparation which involves identifying the relevant stakeholders and understanding their responsibilities. In addition, there

needs to be follow-up to continue the momentum of sharing and collaboration created through the LAA. Sustainability can often be the greatest challenge, but can be addressed through future initiatives and champions wanting to build on the LAA platform. For example, PEARL partners have indicated that a way forward would be to follow up through identification of national calls for proposals to work with local authorities to be able to apply the tools from PEARL and enable further engagement through the LAA.

4 Additional information and References

4.1 Additional information

This policy brief was developed through review of material from Deliverable 5.1 and MS14, as well as reports and interviews from:

- Rethymno, Greece - Patricia Gourgoura, Archontia Lykou (NTUA - National Technical University of Athens)
- Genova, Italy - Alessandra Marchese (GISIG – Geographical Information Systems International Group)
- The Elbe Estuary, Germany - Natasa Manojlovic (TUHH - Technische Universität Hamburg-Harburg)
- Les Boucholeurs, France - Jelena Batica (Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis)
- Marbella, Spain - Eduardo Martínez-Gomariz (CETaqua, Centro Tecnológico del Agua, Fundación Privada)

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