



Norwegian  
Environment  
Agency

# Involvement of municipalities and local groups *a key to successful WFD implementation*

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# Establishing a catchment-based (bottom-up) approach

- Based on good experiences in a handful of catchments pre WFD, a catchment-based approach with local water boards and dedicated coordinators has now been introduced in most of Norway's approx. 100 catchments.
- The positions are funded through a joint venture between national, regional and local authorities.
- The catchments are typically inter-municipal, since we have more than 350 municipalities in Norway.
- The water boards and coordinators link municipalities and other stakeholders together around shared water issues, across municipal boundaries and interests.



*Catchment coordinator demonstrating live crayfish to a school class.*

# The importance of involving municipalities and local stakeholders



*Catchment coordinator addressing politicians from the Oslo-fjord catchment.*

- The municipalities are important authorities, responsible for:
  - management of drinking water and wastewater
  - surface water runoff
  - impacts from agriculture
  - land use management in and along the watercourses
  - smaller/local pollution issues
- Facilitating public participation functions best at local level:
  - people feel ownership/responsibility to their local river/lake
  - allows for the use of local and experience-based knowledge
  - allows for measures adopted to the local context
- Local participation and support is a key to good river basin management plans, gives credibility to the plans and loyalty to their implementation.

# Tasks and coverage of the catchment coordinators

- The catchment coordinators:
  - are a shared resource and expertise for the municipalities in the catchments
  - assist the municipalities with their responsibilities and tasks in water management
  - contribute to public information, awareness raising and participation.
- There are 64 people employed as catchment coordinators: 34 full-time (covering 1 – 3 catchments each) and 30 part-time.
- In 16 catchments there is a 100% position as coordinator, in 45 catchments there is a 50% position, and in 16 catchments there is a 33% position.



*Catchment coordinator participating in survey of fish in local river.*

# Multi level governance: *top down* and *bottom up*

**Top  
down**

Inter-ministerial Committee for Water Management  
Inter-agency Committee for Water management

- Policy guidelines (ambition level)
- Guidance and templates for RBMPs
- Annual budget for water governance and measures

**9 regional River Basin Management Plans**

- Local and experience-based knowledge
- Measures adopted to the local context
- Local ownership and support for RBMP

**Bottom  
up**

Cathment Water Boards and Coordinators  
Municipalities, stakeholders and the public



# Results of evaluations and reviews

## National Evaluation of Water Management 2016:

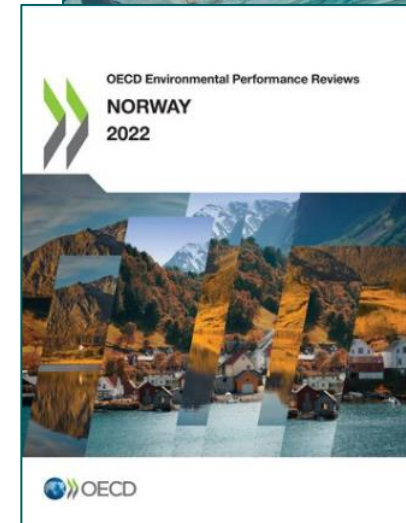
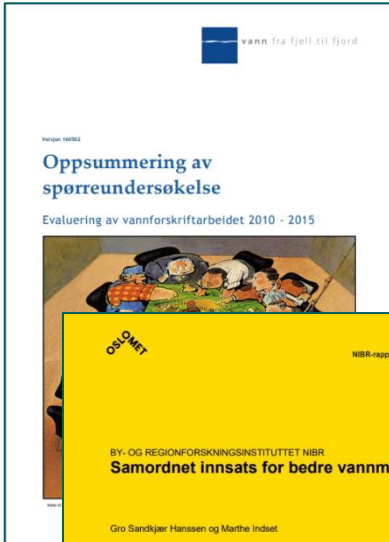
- The municipalities have a key role in achieving good local anchoring and participation.
- The catchment coordinators are emphasized as a key to successful work in the catchment.

## Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR, 2021):

- The new Water Governance has become an established organisation and collaborative practice.
- The organisation of the catchments with coordinators is highlighted as the most positive aspect.
- This is crucial for municipal anchoring and water cooperation across municipal boundaries.

## OECD Environmental performance reviews, Norway 2022:

- Implementation of the EU WFD is well structured, involving all levels of government.
- Key elements are broad inclusion of stakeholders and strong local anchoring of decision making.
- This framework could serve as a model for other aspects of ecosystem and land management.



# Some remaining challenges

Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR, 2021):

- Continuity among the catchment coordinators is considered a particular success criterion.

National Evaluation of Water Management 2023:

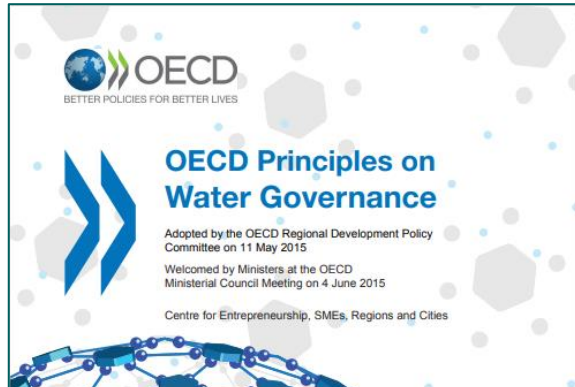
- Permanent and predictable funding for catchment coordinators is necessary so that they can have permanent positions.
- It is necessary to strengthen and support the work of the catchment coordinators:
  - networks in the RBDs organized by the RBD-CA
  - national follow-up from the Norwegian Environment Agency



Foto: vannområde Hurdalsvassdraget/Vorma

*Catchment coordinator addressing municipal council.*

# OECDs 12 principles of Water Governance have been useful

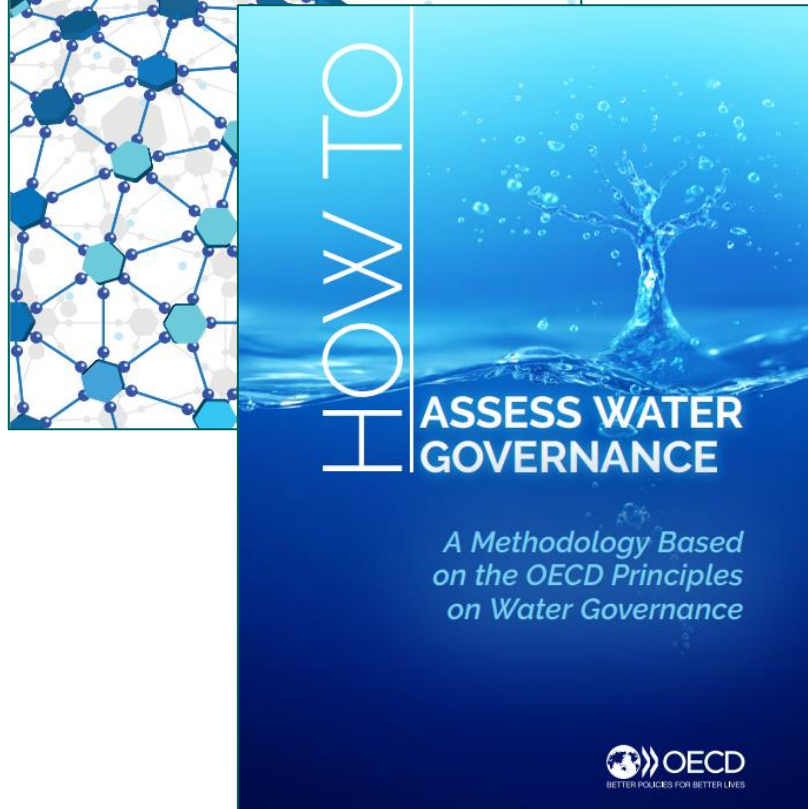


Principle 1: Clearly allocate and distinguish roles and responsibilities for water policymaking, policy implementation, operational management and regulation, and foster co-ordination across these responsible authorities.

Principle 2: Manage water at the appropriate scale(s) within integrated basin governance systems to reflect local conditions, and foster co-ordination between the different scales.

Principle 3: Encourage policy coherence through effective cross-sectoral co-ordination, especially between policies for water and the environment, health, energy, agriculture, industry, spatial planning and land use.

Principle 10: Promote stakeholder engagement for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation







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