

Summary of presentation at “EUROPE INBO 2011

INTEGRATED JOINT APPROACH FOR TRANSBOUNDARY ASPECTS IN DUTCH FRESHWATERS AND NORTH SEA

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Due to the geographical position below sea level as well as down stream, Dutch water systems are vulnerable and Dutch watermanagers are facing real challenges to obtain clean, safe and healthy water systems. Certainly for an open system like the North Sea it is important to tackle the problems at source since otherwise they will become widely spread (via suspended matter and bioaccumulation in the food chain) and it will be more difficult to get a clean North Sea. Key solutions are effective communication and joint efforts between the various water authorities (Ministry, Rijkswaterstaat, Provinces, Water Boards and Municipalities), between countries, freshwater and marine watermanagement and between the various Marine Conventions (such as OSPAR and HELCOM), International River Commissions (such as Rhine) and the EU Directives WFD and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Also important is to follow a common River Basin wide approach in identifying sources, fate, transport and concentrations of the various problem parameters such as hazardous substances, nutrients and eutrophication effects.

The Dutch river Rhine-West project, with participation from the start of all Dutch water authorities in the Rhine-West region, illustrates how the various main transport routes and their various scales can be viewed in an integrated way. This results in a clear insight in shared problem parameters, various levels of scale ((sub) regional, national and international) and transport routes across the various borders. With this information the gap between actual and desired state (“distance to targets”) can be assessed and the effectiveness of a joint package of measures, taken to reach the common agreed and accepted targets for downstream waterbodies such as the North Sea, can be identified. This may also assist us to reach the Good Environmental Status in the context of the MSFD.

The principles of stepwise joint approach, adaptive management, commitment and ‘KISS’ (Keep It Simple and Smart) will further help us when models are insecure.