

EVENT DESCRIPTION - « WP2 / Regional information meeting »

Title: Small hydro: new legal framework and regional stakes

Date & location: 30th March, Lyon

Organiser: Rhônealénergie-Environnement

Number of Participants: 20

Short description:

This half-day meeting gathered some of the main regional players concerned by small hydro power plants. The new French law on water was presented and discussed. Hydro power producers presented their position and their regional projects. The contribution to a regional “observer” which would give a follow-up of the regional hydraulic production was also discussed.

Background:

Small hydro in Rhône-Alpes was not developed a lot during the last ten years. Projects are often blocked during several years before they start running and this is mostly due to administrative problems. Then, it's necessary to have a better understanding of the legislation and find solutions to the difficulties which are usually met.

Programme:

- Presentation of the different legislations linked to hydraulics and energy (and especially of the new French law on water and aquatic environment) : Michel Delprat (DIREN : region authority on environmental issues)
- Future objectives of the main regional hydro power producers
- Discussion about the regional observatory of energy: RAEE would like to follow the electricity production from all the Region's small hydro power plants.

Results, follow-up:

The following points were mainly discussed and stressed:

- the environmental impact of hydraulic plants : the installations must be well integrated in their environment and in the whole life of the surrounding territory. Nevertheless, the French legislation requires precise measures of pollutants in the river and this should be enough to know the real environmental impact.
- “Compensation water”: the French law requires a “compensation water” of one tenth of the annual flow. It was stressed that such a requirement means to loose 800 MW capacity which represents a lot. The new French law on water brings more flexibility as regards these “compensation water”
- small hydro power plants on the drinking water network : these projects are often submitted to the interpretation of the law by local authorities because of the imprecise legislation on this issue. It was proposed to launch a working group which could bring some help on special cases but local authorities did not really agree. We might then only propose a mailing list to discuss on precise projects. There was

- nobody representing regional sanitary authorities in this meeting therefore we propose to organise a special meeting in May or June with all the authorities of the Region to discuss about the sanitary legislation which applies to hydraulic plants on the drinking water network.
- even if few projects are launched at the moment, efforts must be done to keep competencies on small hydro in Rhône-Alpes
- Producers have no specific strategy as regards small hydraulics in Rhone-Alpes. Then they just presented there on-going projects.
- Finally, Rhônealpénergie-Environnement proposed to update the regional observatory on hydraulic installations in the region. The aim is to list all the installations and to follow there annual production.

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