



IWRM in the Adda basin, Northern Italy

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The Adda river basin, in Northern Italy, is a 6.500 km² wide basin which includes the Como Lake. The lake has been used as a regulated multipurpose reservoir for sixty years and its management has been primarily aimed at the satisfaction of downstream water demands for irrigation and hydropower generation, as well as at the control of floods, both on the lake shores and on the outflowing Adda river. Due to the changing legal and hydrological conditions the conflict between these objectives has become a burning issue; indeed, diversion consents for irrigation are currently under revision and instream minimum flow requirements have been recently decreed and are being gradually introduced; in addition a number of extremely dry spring and summer seasons followed one another in the last years, causing water deficits in agriculture, damages to the tourism sector, and severe stress to the riverine ecosystem. Arguments involve also the management of the alpine hydroelectric reservoirs in the Adda basin upstream of the lake, totalling an active capacity twice that of the lake itself, with agricultural users claiming violation of their water rights by the more recent hydroelectric users.

In 2005 the TwoLe Project was financed by the CARIPLO Bank Foundation with two main purposes: a methodological purpose, which consists in fully developing and implementing the Participatory and Integrated Planning (PIP) procedure, devised by some of the authors according with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Integrated Water Resources Management paradigm; an operational purpose, which refers to the pilot application of PIP and of the related software tools to support the planning process in the Adda basin. This contribution focuses on the Adda case study, which demonstrates that a coherent and transparent procedure like PIP may be extremely effective in actually implementing the integration paradigm as well as in stimulating and managing the active participation of the stakeholders.