



UNITED KINGDOM: **PARRETT CATCHMENT PROJECT**

1. **Location of the study:** Parrett River Basin, U.K.

2. **Author(s):** Humphrey Temperley¹

3. **Brief description of flood management practice**

Parrett Catchment is south-west of U.K., covering 1,690 sq km with most of the lower catchment below high tide level. Due to this topography, the rivers cannot discharge when the tide is high and thus cause prolonged flooding in low-lying areas including urbanized, agricultural land and ecologically precious moors and levels.

Following a severe summer flood in 1997 and a 1999/2000 winter flood which caused serious localized damage to both farming and ecological interests, public concern about effective flood management rapidly rose.

Mr. Humphrey Temperley, current chair of the Parrett Catchment Project (PCP), first advocated an integrated flood management plan that became the PCP, and the idea further developed by inviting a wide range of partners. They were keen to participate in a series of workshops and seminars led by the County of Somerset, U.K. The PCP was started in 2000. The workshop process combined local people and experts on equal terms and used external neutral facilitators. The face-to-face contact at the workshops rapidly broke down the barriers that had existed before.

In February 2001, a wide range of participants representing all the interests in the area enthusiastically endorsed the Action Strategy. The Action Strategy includes 12 structural and non-structural components, the implementation of which is shared by a variety of partners.

4. **Key issues**

- Wide range of stakeholders participated in decision-making
- Consensus was formed in a short period
- A good mixture of structural and non-structural measures were adopted
- Transformation of thinking in the Catchment from conflict and hostility to positive and constructive partnership

5. **Relevance to the concept of IFM**

The study covers the following aspects of IFM to varying extents:

Water cycle as a whole

Aspect 6 - Effective use of floodwater by maximizing positive aspects of floods

Integration of land and water management

Aspect 2 - Land and water management

Aspect 3 - Laws and regulations for flood and water mgmt

Aspect 12 - Multi-functional solutions (engineered wetlands, water quality treatment, flood alleviation)

Integrated river basin management approach to flood management

¹ Parrett Catchment Project



Best mix of strategies

Aspect 10 - Best mix of structural and non-structural measures

Participatory approach

Aspect 5 - Stakeholder involvement in decision-making
Aspect 7 - Community-based approach
Aspect 9 – Effective linkage between existing institutions

Integrated hazards impact mitigation

Aspect 1 - Cross-sectoral integration of disaster management strategies
Flood plain maps and zoning
Aspect 11 - Free and open exchange of data

6. Comments

- (i) Potential strong points of the case study
 - Cross-sectoral integration and the involvement of all stakeholders
 - A good example of IFM in practice

- (ii) Potential for practices mentioned to be transferred/applied to other regions with geophysical and socio-economic characteristics)
The lessons learned and approaches used to foster consensus amongst stakeholders. It may be easy to replicate the approach adopted by the PCP for small catchments but may not be so easy for larger areas.