

Marrakech: new partnerships for local adaptation to climate change. First outcomes from the Italian Pavilion side event: “Voluntary tools for local adaptation: the potential of PPP such as river contracts”

River contracts as a practice have won a wide visibility over the last few years and have been formally recognised by the Italian national law as bottom-up governance mechanisms to be spread and promoted as a means to implement EU Flood and Water Directives. The tool has also been applied in other world regions for an integrated management of water as a resource.

River contracts may serve also as a tool for implementing climate adaptation plans on the regional and local level with a significant participation of the private sector, the civil society and non-state actors (NSA).

They allow for the construction of a public-private-partnership (PPP) where public non-state governments, the private sector and the civil society cooperate for implementing local and individual measures enhancing territorial resilience by introducing a “new deal” to public adaptation policy.

Private participation in river contracts is essential to enhance resilience and spur economic growth, income and well-being – traditionally had for issues of public policy. However the discussion highlighted the need to have a strong role of institutions to steer the initiative and assure successful outcomes.

Guidelines for setting up River Contracts have been developed in Italy by the Ministry for the environment, the National Institute for Environmental Research – ISPRA and the National Board on River Contracts(2015)that have been presented in Marrakech.

At the moment there is not a univocal link between river contracts and adaptation planning on the regional and local level and both theoretical and institutional efforts are required to this purpose. A few non-state governments however are testing some pioneering initiatives to be further developed in the close future.

The examples collected at COP22 come from diverse world regions allowed for the presentation of Italian experiences (river contracts and adaptation plans in Abruzzo and Lombardia regions), French cases (Artois-Picardie river basin), MKK and from Morocco (groundwater contract in Souss-Massa) where the importance given to adaptation concerns as well as the presumed cost-effectiveness of the river contracts as adaptation tools have been discussed.

The side event, coordinated by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, promoted by Regione Abruzzo and organized with the scientific support of EURAC research, was the point of departure for a wider discourse on the role of non-state actors in public policy and the individual benefits they may derive from joining a river contract, as well as on the type of incentives that public policy should provide to widen the participation of the private sector in these processes.

COP 22 allowed to make visible to a global audience river contracts as a practice and to find opportunities and partners available to test river contracts as tools for implementing local adaptation measures, especially in the regions where there is a stronger need for adaptation and river contracts are relatively easy to implement.

The outcomes of the side event and the experiences of regional governments on river contracts and local adaptation to climate change can enter the COP Med initiative, promoted by MENA regional governments, where a wider participation of Italy is strongly recommended and was welcomed by the Regions participating in the side event.

The side event allowed to stress the importance that all levels of government work together aiming at achieving internationally agreed targets and even more ambitious ones, whenever possible.

At any rate, a multilevel governance is needed that may consider these global targets a priority and may help coordinate the actions performed at different territorial levels and by different stakeholders, by means of more framed decision-making mechanisms.

A voluntary network will be set up among the participating institutions aiming at continuing this sharing of experiences especially concerning the main aspects emerged in the debate on: vertical coordination, effective participation of stakeholders to governing river contracts, monitoring systems addressing the enforcement of the measures set by EU water and floods Directives, more diffused use of PPPs, design of incentivisation policies to the participation of the private sector and new non-state actors in local processes aimed at enhancing territorial resilience.

The outcomes of this event will be reported also at the territorial level aiming at demonstrating how the discussions held at UNFCCC COP22 need to involve also businesses, citizens and all the administrative levels holding direct responsibilities in the implementation of local adaptation measures.

Contacts

Paolo Angelini – Italian Ministry for the Environment: angelini.paolo@minambiente.it

Mario Mazzocca – Undersecretary - Regione Abruzzo: mario.mazzocca@regione.abruzzo.it

Iris Flacco – Regione Abruzzo: iris.flacco@regione.abruzzo.it

Gabriela Scanu – Italian Ministry for the Environment: scanu.gabriela@minambiente.it

Massimo Bastiani – Italian National Board of River Contracts: m.bastiani@ecoazioni.it

Luca Cetara – EURAC research: luca.cetara@eurac.edu

Piero Di Carlo – University “G.d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara: piero.dicarlo@unich.it