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Triangular cooperation in Brazil

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Through the "Gaúcho Forum of Committees", the 26 Basin Committees of the State of Rio Grande do Sul have participated in a Triangular Cooperation Program since September 2014. It allows them to benefit from the experience of the Loire-Brittany Water Agency and the International Office for Water, in France, and the Intermunicipal Consortium of Piracicaba, Capivari and Jundiá River Basins (PCJ), located in the Brazilian State of São Paulo, which has been one of the pilot river basins for applying the Brazilian Law on Water Resources.

A seminar addressing members of these "Gaúcho" Basin Committees was organized in December 2014 in the city of Caxias do Sul, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the French Water Law (1964) and the 20th anniversary of the Water Law of Rio Grande do Sul (1994).

It allowed focusing on the progress made in the implementation of a decentralized and participatory model of water management in river basins in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, and estimating its prospects.

The city of Caxias do Sul, for instance, is located upstream of the Taquari-Antas and Caí basins, today characterized by a strong pollution coming from industrial production and intensive stock breeding. However, these two rivers have their mouths in the Guaíba Lake near the State capital, Porto Alegre, which suffers from the consequences of these activities.

In this case, the lack of Water Agencies, yet planned in the Law of 1994, makes it difficult to achieve results, in spite of the dynamism of the "Gaúcho" Committees.

The State Law plans these agencies to be public institutions, while those established in the rest of Brazil have been Associations, more flexible and easy to create.

The experiences of partners in the cooperation project have enlightened the water stakeholders of Rio Grande do Sul in the search for solutions suited to their particular legal and institutional context.

Instruments for integrated water resources management, whether financial, or for planning and information purpose, are indeed fundamental for the Basin Committees to take appropriate measures.

The Triangular Cooperation Program will continue in 2015 with a study tour of the "Gaúcho" Committees in the PCJ river basins, a second seminar in the State of Rio Grande do Sul (this time in the Rio Uruguai Basin), and technical missions on several priority topics, including pollution by nitrates.